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THE OTHER SIDE OF THE HILL

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THE OTHER SIDE OF THE HILL

AND HOME AGAIN

BY

F. W. BOREHAM

AUTHOR OF

"FACES IN THE FIRE," "MUSHROOMS ON THE MOOR," "THE GOLDEN MILESTONE," "MOUNTAINS IN THE MIST," "THE LUGGAGE OF LIFE,"

ETC., ETC.

THE ABINGDON PRESS

NEW YORK CINCINNATI

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First American Edition Printed September, 1917
Reprinted April and December, 1919

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BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION

For over twenty years I lived among the mountains. Their rugged summits saluted me every morning. Mountains are usually employed in literature as emblems of immutability. My own experience is quite otherwise. To me they were positively kaleidoscopic. I never saw a mountain look just the same two days running; whilst the fantastic changes that overtook them as I viewed them from different points of the compass were a perennial source of wonder and admiration. It was always worth while seeing the peak from the other side, even if that side were windswept, bleak, and bare. We might prefer the shelter of our own side; but, when we returned, the view of the mountain from the dining-room window was always more satisfying because of our ability to supplement the scene from our newly acquired knowledge of the land beyond the ranges.

In this book I have tried to see *The Other Side of the Hill*—and the other side of other things. We shall probably be glad to get home again and

to resume our usual outlook; but we shall at least return to the old home with a new content, and, let us hope, with a few fresh landscapes in the picture-gallery of memory.

FRANK W. BOREHAM.

ARMADALE, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA.

PART I

I

SWINGS AND ROUND-ABOUTS

It was Regatta Day. There are few things in this old world more fascinating than a crowd on pleasure bent. On my left was the river—a glittering expanse of blue water alive with craft of every size and kind. To my right, as far as eye could see, the green hills of the great domain were smothered by one vast, surging concourse of holiday-spirited humanity. Everybody was moving, and the effect was kaleidoscopic. The white blouses and waving gossamers of the women alternated with the more sombre appearance of the men. Hither and thither, children with gay ribbons and bright sashes danced and romped. In and out, like the flashing threads on the restless loom, the colours wove themselves into ever-changing patterns. The motley throng was broken up here and there by the tents and the booths, the Aunt Sallys and the side-shows. The seven wonders of the world were here! There could be no mistake about that. Brazen-throated showmen shouted it in a perfect frenzy of enthusiasm to the indifferent passer-by; and,

if any sceptics still doubted, the gaudy canvases which furnished the most realistic presentments of the prodigies to be seen within should have sufficed to brush away all such base suspicions. And here, too, were the swings and round-abouts! Oh, those swings and round-abouts! Will there ever appear upon this planet a sour-visaged generation for whom the swings and round-abouts will have no charm? As I caught the sounds of the wondrous organ, to the magic strains of which the wooden horses prance, I thought of Mr. Patrick R. Chalmers. It is one of life's great refreshments to have met Mr. Chalmers's cheery showman, with his merry eye and sunburnt face, his hungry lurcher and his brindled terrier pup, his painted caravan, and, above all, his swings and round-abouts, jogging down the dusty old English lane.

"'Goo'-day,' said 'e; 'goo-day,' said I; 'an' 'ow d'you find things go,
An' what's the chance o' millions when you runs a travellin' show?'
'I find,' said 'e, 'things very much as 'ow I've always found,
For mostly they goes up and down, or else goes round and round.'
Said 'e, 'The job's the very spit o' what it always were;
It's bread and bacon mostly when the dog don't catch a 'are;
But lookin' at it broad, an' while it ain't no merchant king's,
What's lost upon the round-abouts we pulls up on the swings.'"

This, according to Mr. Chalmers, was the genial showman's philosophy. After the conversation in the lane, the caravan moved on once more.

"'E thumped upon the footboard, an' 'e lumbered on again,
To meet a gold-dust sunset, down the owl-light in the lane;
For 'up and down an' round,' says 'e, 'goes all appointed things,
An' losses on the round-abouts means profits on the swings!'"

Now this is worth thinking about. The showman's philosophy must be taken to pieces, carefully analysed and considered bit by bit. If it means anything, it means that there are two distinct styles on which life may be lived. There is the style represented by the swings, and there is the style represented by the round-abouts. Some lives are all ups and downs, like the experience of the people on the swings. Others, again, are all round and round, like the experience of the people on the round-abouts. Or, perhaps, I shall get nearer to the heart of things if I say that life has to be lived sometimes on the principle of the swings and sometimes on the principle of the round-abouts. "Sometimes things goes up and down and sometimes round and round."

As I sit here to-day, I look back on two separate years in my life's little story. The one was positively crowded with eventfulness. Some of

the greatest triumphs and the most crushing disappointments of my life came to me in that year. In that year I tasted some of my sweetest joys and my bitterest sorrows. Everything was sensational. It was all ups and downs. It was a year on the swings. The other year was lived on an exactly opposite principle. From January to December nothing happened. I slept every night, for the whole three hundred and sixty-five nights, in the same bed. I preached every Sunday for fifty-two Sundays in the same pulpit. I saw each day the same faces. I went each day the same accustomed round. There came to me that year no very great elation nor any overwhelming grief. I was perfectly happy—as happy as the laughing children on the revolving wooden horses. But it was distinctly a year on the round-abouts. I suppose that we all have times when life treats us like the swings, and times when it behaves itself towards us just like the round-abouts.

The only thing to do is to set the one over against the other. If you are tired of the round-abouts, remember the fun that you had on the swings, and think of the enjoyment that they will again afford you. Or if, on the other hand, your brain sickens with the violent movement of the swings, remember the pleasure that was yours on the round-abouts, and make up your

mind that that satisfaction will soon be yours again. Most people, I fancy, prefer the swings. The showman in the lane hinted as much when he twice referred to the losses on the round-abouts and the profits on the swings. Obviously, the swings are the more popular. We love the thrill. You hold your breath as you soar skyward and the earth flies from you; your heart seems to rush to your mouth as you swoop towards the ground once more. You sail gloriously forwards through the rushing air; and the next moment you fall hopelessly backwards through a vacuum in space. It is a series of intoxicating sensations. Nobody who remembers the delirious joy of that sort of thing will wonder that the showman found that the swings paid him best. But it would never have done, merely on that account, to have travelled with swings only. People get tired of swings. They long for a change, and, longing for a change, they welcome the round-abouts. Life must be taken as a whole. It consists of swings and round-abouts. It is futile to cavil at the one and glorify the other.

"For up an' down, an' round an' round, goes all appointed things,
An' losses on the round-abouts means profit on the swings."

That is the point. The swings and the round-

abouts make up the one show. They are the separate parts of a complete whole. It is a waste of time to consider the one except in relation to the other. The swings belong to the round-abouts; and the round-abouts belong to the swings.

Life is full of just such supplementary things. We are too fond of putting the swings in a class by themselves, and the round-abouts in a class by themselves, as though we were dividing the sheep from the goats. Then, having separated them, we proceed to compare them. We contrast the up-and-down movement of the swings with the round-and-round movement of the round-abouts. We magnify the pleasures of the one to the disparagement of the other, until there comes lumbering down the lane a rumbling old caravan, driven by a wise but swarthy philosopher who assures us that it would never, never do to travel the country either with swings alone or with round-abouts alone. You must have both swings and round-abouts. A fine instance of this sort of thing occurred in the middle of the eighteenth century. We were at the crisis of our fate. Great Britain was at war on three continents. In Europe, in India, and in America things were going heavily against us. Disaster abroad led to confusion at home. Riots broke out everywhere, and the nation was for a moment entirely out of control. For eleven weeks England was

without a responsible Ministry. And why? It was all a matter of round-abouts versus swings.

One crowd cried, *"Let Pitt be Minister!"*

The other crowd cried, *"Let Newcastle be Minister!"*

All England asked, *"Shall it be Pitt or Newcastle?"*

And then some genius inquired, *"Why not Pitt and Newcastle?"*

Exactly! Why ask whether it shall be swings *or* round-abouts? Why not swings *and* round-abouts? So England called Pitt and Newcastle together to save the nation. "And thus it was found," as Macaulay says, "that these two men, so unlike in character, so lately mortal enemies, were necessary to each other. Newcastle had fallen in November for want of that public confidence which Pitt possessed and of that parliamentary support which Pitt was better qualified than any man of his time to give. Pitt had fallen in April, for want of that species of influence which Newcastle had passed his whole life in acquiring and hoarding. Neither of them had power enough to support himself. Each of them had power enough to overturn the other. Their union would be irresistible." They united; and the combination proved the salvation of the country. It is so silly to be always setting the swings against the round-abouts and the round-

abouts against the swings. The showman in the lane found that, by combining swings and round-abouts, he could make a decent living.

For that is the beauty of it all. People talk glibly of the law of compensation. Emerson has an essay on the subject; Paley has a lecture; and Miss Havergal has a poem. It is all very good so far as it goes, but it does not go far enough. If I lose a sovereign on Monday and find a sovereign on Tuesday, I am compensated, it is true; but I am no better off. I cannot live on the gains made in the course of that profitless transaction. The showman in the lane was, Mr. Chalmers says, "a cheery cove and sunburnt," and with good reason. For there was something more than the law of compensation at work in his behalf. The profits on the swings not only compensated for the losses on the round-abouts, but the profits on the swings and the round-abouts as a whole gave him a clear surplus on which he could live without anxiety. The whole thing was a success, and it kept him smiling. That, I say, is the beauty of it. When I am able to strike life's balance-sheet; when I am able to reckon up all the losses I have sustained by going round-and-round, and the gains I have accumulated by all my ups-and-downs, I shall discover that the entire business has resulted in a profit far beyond my dreams. I may sometimes have to run

my round-abouts at a loss in order to attract patrons to my swings; such a proceeding is quite common in every line of business. But, depend upon it, when I at last take my swings and my round-abouts as a whole, and make up the grand account, I shall find that I have not merely been compensated for my losses, but enriched beyond all thought. The showman who handles his swings and his round-abouts at all wisely will find the buttercups, the bluebells, and the hawthorn in the lane looking lovelier every time he drives the caravan along it; and each time he comes his face will have a cheerier smile and his soul will be singing a sweeter song.

II

THE IVIED PORCH

I AM no architect, and technical discussions affecting matters connected with that craft are not in my line. But I came upon a matter to-day that greatly interested me. Should a house have a porch or should it not? What pictures the question calls to mind! The little country cottage by the side of the road, with its attics, its quaint projecting upper rooms, and its crazy lattice windows! And the porch—the pretty little porch—covered in nine cases out of ten with ivy or honeysuckle or tea-roses or Virginia-creeper! The porch is certainly one of the adornments of the English countryside, and I do not wonder that the old folk are disinclined to see it vanish. For a writer in a London journal, whose article has driven my own pen to paper, tells us that it is largely a conflict between the older generation and the younger one. The new cottages now being erected have, it seems, no porch. The old people resent the omission. Some of their sweetest and most sacred mem-

ories cluster about the porch. In the porch, our writer explains, there is just room for a nice conversational party, four in all, two on either side. "The cottage porch is the summer fireside; it is the inalienable perquisite of the father and mother and their cronies. The fate of England, and the rest of the world also, has many a time been settled in the crude wooden seats that jut out into the garden. Generations of families have peopled some of these porches, for in the old days good work was put into them, and solid timber was used." That is so. But it would be a mistake to suppose that all the associations connected with the porch had to do with those occasions when it was occupied by *four*. Even the oldest of the old people were young once, although you might not think so. And there were times in those days when the ivied or rose-covered porch was monopolized by *two*, and when any third comer would have felt instinctively that there was no room for him. The ivied porch is like Goldsmith's

> ". . . hawthorn bush, with seats beneath the shade,
> For talking age and whispering lovers made."

The memories of the old folks may be failing; but they do not forget those honeyed hours. And it is because of such golden recollections in memory's hallowed background that the thought

of the porch is to them so instinct with the atmosphere of romance.

Now this London writer who has had the misfortune to set me scribbling goes no farther than I have indicated. He deals purely and simply with the architectural aspect of the question. On the architectural phase of the matter I shall therefore have nothing to say. But the thing strikes me in quite another light. I undertake to show that this problem of *porch* or *no-porch* is one of the most characteristic, one of the most grave, and one of the most tragic problems of our modern life.

The porch represented the old-fashioned way of approaching a thing. In passing through the porch you were entering the house gradually; in the absence of a porch you enter the house abruptly. The porch somehow appealed to your faculty for preparation. In the porch you involuntarily reminded yourself of the respect due to the people on whom you were calling, and you refreshed your mind as to the business that had brought you to their door. The porch created a certain atmosphere; and the creation of that atmosphere gave tone to the interview that followed. Now this fondness for paving the way was eminently characteristic of the generations that built those porches. Take down any old volume of lectures, speeches, addresses, or ser-

mons. The first thing to strike you will be the elaborate introduction with which the speaker led gradually up to his subject. What an ocean of words rolls turgidly between the first sentence and the first head! In the old days our fathers spent endless pains on the exordium. They were great believers in the prologue, the preamble and the preliminaries. They liked to get *en rapport* with their audiences before they began to grapple seriously with their themes. They liked a porch. But we have dispensed with the necessity for such formalities. We see no more need for a porch to a house than for a preface to a book; and has the twentieth century ever caught itself reading a preface? We demand that our orators shall plunge right away into the very heart of their subjects. There must be no beating about the bush; no hovering on the brink; no preparatory scrapings of the violin. If the joint is ready for carving, why waste time in toying with the knives and forks? The ornate and carefully rounded introductory periods, so dear to the heart of an eighteenth-century speaker or preacher, are like gravel in the teeth to a twentieth-century audience. They are rarely heard; and, when heard, are heard with ill-concealed impatience.

The theme has its social implications. We boast, in our free-and-easy way, that we have

dispensed with the need for an introduction. We speak to whom we will nowadays, without waiting to be formally introduced. It is good in its way. It may be that our grandfathers stood too much on ceremony. But it may also be that we have too lightly discarded the things that they valued. There is a place for the introduction. The porch has its own utility. Mr. H. G. Wells, in his *New Machiavelli,* shows how we manage without it. "One evening," his youthful hero says, "I came by chance on a number of young people promenading by the light of a number of shops towards Beckington, and, with all the glory of a glowing cigarette between my lips, I joined their strolling number. These twilight parades consisted mainly of shop apprentices, workgirls, boy clerks, and so forth, stirred by mysterious intimations, spending their first-earned money upon collars and ties, chiffon hats, smart lace collars, walking-sticks, sunshades, or cigarettes, and coming valiantly into the vague transfiguring mingling of gaslight and evening to walk up and down, to eye meaningly, even to accost and make friends." Mr. Wells goes on to describe what happened. "Two girls passed me. I half turned, and the shorter one glanced back over her shoulder. I was instantly passionately in love with her. I turned and followed them. I flung away my cigarette ostentatiously, lifted

my school cap, and spoke to them. The girl answered shyly." And so on. We have dispensed with the old-fashioned porch; we need no introductions nowadays; but it is an open question as to whether or not we are the better for the change.

Is it not by way of a porch that we enter into life itself? We do not burst suddenly out of the everywhere into here. There are long months during which we hover shyly on the threshold. It is a time full of mystery and wonder and fluttering anticipation on the part of those into whose home we are about to enter. What thoughtful preparations for our entrance are there going forward!

> "Little caps in secret sewn,
> And hid in many a quiet nook."

And what dream-faces haunt their fancy as they try to conjure up the likeness of the form they will so soon embrace! The new-comer is in the porch; and a fresh sacredness enters into life at the very thought of his entrance. It is part of life's deep and awful sanctity.

And if this world is entered by way of a porch, so is the next. Let Longfellow explain:

> "There is no death! What seems so is transition.
> This life of mortal breath
> Is but the suburb of the life elysian
> Whose portal we call Death!"

All the best things are approached by way of porches. We enter our Sundays by way of our Saturdays; and Saturday constitutes itself a kind of porch through which we pass into the golden day. Mark Rutherford tells us that, at the establishment kept by the Misses Ponsonby, it was the custom for one of the girls, at half-past nine precisely, to read aloud from a selected book. "On Saturday a book, not exactly religious, but related to religion as nearly as possible as Saturday is related to Sunday, was invariably selected. On this particular Saturday it was Clarke's *Travels in Palestine*." And Robert Burns has cast a glory over our Saturdays for ever. If a day comes in which our classics are torn from us, we shall cling to the *Cotter's Saturday Night* until the very, very last. It is part of our priceless heritage. The picture it presents is one of the sweetest, strongest, and tenderest in our literature. The tired cotter putting away his plough with a sigh of grateful relief as he thinks of the whole day's rest in front of him; the homeward trudge after a good week's work well done; the welcome from the bairnies playing by the gate; the cheerful room; the dropping in, one by one, of the elder children who have been away at work since Monday; the shy arrival of Jenny's bashful lover; the loud hum of eager conversation as they discuss the events

of the week by the glowing fireside; the bountiful supper so thoroughly enjoyed; and the crowning act of family worship.

"Then homeward all take off their several way;
The youngling cottagers retire to rest:
The parent pair their secret homage pay
And proffer up to heaven the warm request
That He who stills the raven's clam'rous nest,
And decks the lily fair in flow'ry pride,
Would, in the way His wisdom sees the best,
For them and for their little ones provide;
But, chiefly, in their hearts with grace divine preside."

It was thus that the devout cottager fashioned for himself and for his family a porch through which they might pass into the sanctities of the Sabbath.

The subject has other applications. There is the important matter of religious conversation. It is a great art. There are few pleasures greater than a heart-to-heart talk with a kindred spirit on the greatest themes of all. And yet the prospects of so altogether profitable an experience may be ruined at the outset by a thoughtless or careless approach to the theme. An abrupt invasion of so sacred a realm is as unseemly as bursting into church with a run and a bound. We instinctively pause in the church porch and remind ourselves of the Majesty into whose august Presence we are about to enter. And, in the same way, there is a certain attitude of

soul without which holy themes can never be suitably approached. "Mr. Cardew," we are told, "had a trick of starting subjects suddenly, and he very often made his friends very uncomfortable by the precipitate introduction, without any warning, of remarks upon serious matters." Mr. Cardew may have his defenders; but on the whole I am certain that he would have been all the better for a porch.

It may be possible to go to the other extreme. Mr. Spurgeon thought that, in *Pilgrim's Progress,* John Bunyan overdid the porch. The distance from the City of Destruction to the Cross at which the pilgrim lost his burden was, Mr. Spurgeon thought, too great. There were too many preliminaries. "If," he says, "Bunyan meant to show what *usually* happens, he was right; but if he meant to show what *ought* to have happened, he was wrong." Bunyan was, of course, writing out of his own experience; and readers of *Grace Abounding* know that, in his own experience, he spent some time in the porch. A porch there must be. No man yet entered the kingdom of God without passing through some preliminary and preparatory experience of penitence or desire. So far, beyond the shadow of a doubt, Bunyan was right; but so was his critic. The man whose desire for deliverance is as great as was Christian's when

he set out on pilgrimage will be wise to make his way to the Cross with all possible speed. Into the porch every pilgrim must enter; but there is no need for a long sojourn there. The porch stands right against the door; and inside that door there awaits the pilgrim such a welcome as his fondest fancy has never dared to imagine.

III

THE ENJOYMENT OF SORROW

I WAS lounging in a cosy arm-chair among some cheerful companions by a friend's fireside the other evening when, looking up, my attention was arrested by a striking picture on the wall before me. It was a war picture, and a very sad one at that. It was entitled "The Tale of a Glorious End," by A. C. Michael. The most prominent figure is a young fellow in khaki, with his arm in a sling, who is telling of the engagement in which he himself was wounded, and in which his comrade fell. He is evidently in his comrade's home. A soldier's photograph stands on the table, and the wounded man has laid his companion's sword beside it. On the left hand of the picture is an arm-chair in which the bereft mother sits, convulsed in an agony of grief. Beside the chair, and with her arm upon it, is the lady's daughter, listening with tense and strained attention to the story of the brother's death. And beside her is her father, himself an old soldier. He is standing firm and

upright like an officer on parade. He is evidently struggling to avoid any display of emotion as he listens to the tale of his boy's last fatal stand. It is a sad, sad picture, and yet a strangely magnetic one; and during the evening I caught my glance again and again wandering off to once more inspect it.

This picture of a cruel and crushing sorrow started a rather curious train of thought. Why had the artist, a man of taste, culture, and refinement, chosen so mournful a theme? Is there not enough real sorrow in the world without adding to it such inventions of the imagination? And why had my friends bought and framed this pathetic picture? They are the very personification of gentleness and sympathy; what pleasure can they find in this vision of grief upon their wall? What deep and subtle philosophy underlies this strange conjunction of ideas? I think I have a clue.

It is one of the proudest boasts of Art that, in days when the nerves are overwrought and the emotions overcharged, it has a special mission of succour and relief. I was reading the other day a very fine book entitled *The Origins of Art*, by Dr. Yrjo Hirn, Professor of Aesthetic and Modern Literature at the University of Finland. The volume contains a most suggestive essay on "Art the Reliever," in the course of which the

author claims that, by tempering and modifying the emotions, Art may render to public life a practical service the value of which it would be difficult to exaggerate. Strong feeling, he argued, is the natural enemy of clear thinking. Abnormal excitement or undue depression is a menace to well-regulated life and conduct. It is the peculiar province of Art, he goes on to show, to calm and restrain these tumultuous passions, and thus enable reason to resume her throne. Under the spell of Art, excessive joy should lose its defiant and barbaric character, whilst black despair should be dissolved into gentle sadness. Art moves among men, Professor Hirn declares, as Dionysos moved among his devotees, ennobling their joy and blunting the edge of their suffering.

Here we are, then, living in a time of unprecedented tragedy and sorrow. As I write, the War rages at the climax of its fury. Every day hundreds of homes pass through the terrible experience portrayed in Mr. Michael's picture. And here, on the other hand, is Art, claiming that she holds in her keeping a special ministry of comfort. At first blush it does not seem at all probable that this exalted claim can be substantiated. One has but to permit his memory to roam fancy-free through the art galleries that he has visited in days gone by in order to remind himself that

the artist has taken an almost morbid delight in portraying the saddest and most heartrending episodes in human experience. Nobody can visit the Melbourne Art Gallery, for example, without being profoundly moved by pictures like "Anguish" and "The Crisis." The former depicts the dumb agony of the sheep at her inability to save her frozen lamb from the encircling crows. The latter represents the awful suspense of a man who sits by the bedside of his apparently dying wife. The distinctly Australian pictures partake of the same character. The great painting representing the return of the explorers, Burke and Wills, to the deserted camp at Cooper's Creek, and Mr. McCubbin's famous picture of "The Pioneer," are among the most saddening things that one could wish to see. At Sydney it is just the same. Sir Luke Fildes' masterpiece, "The Widower," in which the unhappy man is shown with his sick child on his knee, and a look of inexpressible helplessness on his face, is typical of many more.

Now the time has come to face a crucial question. Art claims to be our comfort in days of sorrow and of weeping; yet Art gives us pictures that are themselves sorrowful, and that themselves move us to tears! Has Art lost her way, or is there some deep significance in all this that does not lie upon the surface? Before we can

solve this problem, we must ask yet one more question. It is this: Why are these pictures so popular? Why are the saddest pictures the greatest favourites? The tendency to portray excessive grief is not confined to that department of Art over which the painter presides. The novelist, the poet, the dramatist, and the musician display the same propensity. More tears have been shed over the misfortunes of Oliver Twist and of Hetty Sorrel than over the miseries of any two characters in actual history; but we do not regard Charles Dickens and George Eliot as our tormentors on that account. We rather love them all the better for having caused us such superfluous grief. The most popular poems are the poems of sadness if not of melancholy. "Enoch Arden" and "Dora" will always appeal to thousands who see no beauty in "In Memoriam" and "Maud." People who have care enough of their own will always crowd a theatre to share the poignant pathos of a great Shakespearian tragedy. Representations of acute mortal anguish such as marks the face of the "Dying Gladiator" have ever been acknowledged as among the purest and most applauded triumphs of the sculptor's art. And the ear will always be conscious of a special charm that mysteriously pervades the strains of plaintive music.

Now how are we to account for the pleasure

that we undoubtedly derive from these realistic delineations of pain? It is not the rapture of revenge. We love, of course, to see Mr. Fagin hanged and Mr. Quilp drowned, because we had already learned most heartily to hate them. But why do we read again and again of the sufferings of Smike and the death of Little Nell? Nor can we attribute to callousness or cruelty this strange fondness of ours for the sorrowful side of Art. Historians declare that high-class Romans used to dilate with the enthusiasm of connoisseurs on the innumerable shades and varieties of anguish depicted on the countenances of the victims of the arena. But the most cursory investigation would reveal the fact that those who most delight in a tender and pathetic ballad, in a sad and mournful drama, or in a really affecting work of art, are by no means the most hardened and brutalized specimens of humanity. And what about my friends beside whose hospitable hearth I spent such happy hours the other night? Nothing would persuade me that it was some innate barbarism that led them to gloat over the anguish of the stricken family represented in Mr. Michael's picture. No; we must look in quite other directions for a solution of the problem, and we may find that the riddle is not really so hard to read as it at first appears.

The fact is that, considered in the abstract, there is always a peculiar pleasure, and therefore a peculiar consolation, in pain. If, by means of some phase of Art, you can take pain out of the internal world and transfer it to the external, if you can render it objective instead of subjective, it becomes instantly transformed into a thing of beauty and a joy for ever. All forms of wretchedness and misery, even our own, are really enjoyable from some point of view. The only trouble, of course, is to discover the precise standpoint from which the anguish must be surveyed, and it is just at this point that the artist comes to our assistance. Herbert Spencer once pointed out that even people who consider themselves to have been cruelly and unjustly treated derive an immense amount of happiness from the mental process of contemplating their own merits and contrasting their fate with their deserts. Is there not a pungent pleasure, peculiar to itself, in the nursing of a grievance? Is there no substratum of sound philosophy underlying the feminine fondness for "a good cry"? And does not Time, by an alchemy of its own, transmute pain into an object of pleasurable contemplation? It is no uncommon thing to find a group of convalescents in a hospital ward pitting the tales of their recent sufferings one against another; and it is easy to see that each

finds a peculiar satisfaction in recalling the agony that is now past. A well-known mountaineer tells of the sickening sensations that swarmed through his brain as, missing his foothold on a frozen pass, he fell down the face of an Alpine glacier. But he adds that he has since derived so much enjoyment from repeatedly telling the story of his misadventure that, taken as a whole, he has come to regard the incident as one of the most pleasant that have befallen him. Many a man who has risen from poverty to affluence is conscious of a pang of exquisite satisfaction as he reflects on the squalor of his earlier conditions.

Those who have read George Gissing's beautiful book, *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft,* will remember the contrast between the abject misery and grinding poverty of the early days, and the perfect happiness found amidst subsequent circumstances of comfort and beauty. "Some day," says Ryecroft, writing from his lovely home in Devonshire, "some day I will go to London and revisit all the places where I housed in the time of my greatest poverty. I have not seen them for a quarter of a century. Once I should have said that there were certain street names, certain mental images of obscure London, which would make me wretched as often as they came before me. Now I find that part of

life interesting and pleasant to look back upon—greatly more so than many subsequent times, when I lived amid decencies and had enough to eat. Some day I will go to London and spend a day or two amid the dear old horrors." Goethe, too, has told us of the abject wretchedness that once almost drove him to a suicide's grave. He resolved, however, as an alternative, to write it all down and thus give it definite form and substance. And when, afterwards, he picked it up, bound in boards, like a picture in its frame, he read and reread the story with an extraordinary glow of exultation. "Like a picture in its frame" —the simile is his own, and it brings us back to the point from which we set out.

Here, then is the striking and suggestive fact, brought vividly and unmistakably before us, that life derives half its pleasure and more than half its consolation from its pain. And this reminds me of a conversation that took place in this very study of mine only a day or two ago. A young fellow called and expressed some astonishment that, in the pulpit, I laid such emphasis upon the Cross. "Is it not too sorrowful a theme for a world that has sorrow enough without it?" But is not the argument that I have just stated the most complete reply to such a question? Art relieves our overwrought nerves and comforts our aching hearts, not with pictures of gaiety,

but with pictures of grief. Sorrow is mocked, not soothed, by laughter. And is not the effective appeal of the Cross to the hearts of all men everywhere the best possible answer to my questioner's inquiry? Little children sit spellbound beneath the pathos of that tender and tragic story. Old people turn back to it and quietly brush away their tears. The dying cling to it long after all other narratives have lost their charm. And strong men, bearing the burden and heat of the day, find in it a marvellous incentive to goodness and a matchless spur to courage. It fits the human heart as a key fits its lock. Here, if anywhere, is Art the Reliever; the highest, holiest art; the art of which all other art is but a faint shadow and a dim reflection. The same principle holds steadily all through.

> "O Cross, that liftest up my head,
> I dare not ask to fly from thee;
> I lay in dust life's glory dead,
> And from the ground there blossoms red
> Life that shall endless be."

It is from pictures of pain that a pain-racked world derives comfort and courage. It is from the dereliction and darkness of the Cross that the world draws strength and hope and the life that knows no ending.

IV

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE HILL

"BUT what is on *the other side of the hill?*"

That was the question. That is always the question. My friend and I had been spinning along in the car, the towering mountain and the shining harbour behind us, whilst each bend in the road presented us with a fresh unfolding of the ceaseless panorama of woodland, pasture, and stream. We were bound for nowhere, and so far as we could see the road led there. We were out for the pure sake of being out. All at once a sense of chilliness crept over us, and we were reminded that even the wealthiest days become bankrupt at last. Should we turn round and go home? There was only one objection. Right ahead of us lay a long range of hills. They had attracted our attention a few hours earlier as we sat under a big tree by the side of the road enjoying an al-fresco lunch. During the afternoon their massive forms had crept nearer and nearer, as the car had sped swiftly towards them. They captivated our fancy and lured us on. There was something taunting and challenging about them.

"Shall we turn round and go home?"

"But what is on the other side of the hill?"

That, I say, is the question. It is the oldest question in the world and the greatest question in the world. All the pathos and the tragedy of the ages are crammed into it. It was the first question that man asked; it will be the last that he will try to answer. Wherever on this planet you find a man, you find him with eyes turned wistfully towards the distant ranges, repeating to himself again and yet again the old, old question, "The hill! The other side of the hill! What is on the other side of the hill?"

That is how history and geography—and everything else—came to be. The first man, toiling amidst his weedy pastures, earned his bread in the sweat of his brow. But often, in the cool of the evening, he sat outside his primitive dwelling and pointed away to the hill tops that here and there broke the skyline. "I wonder," he said a hundred times to his companion, "I wonder what is on the other side of the hill!" It never fell to his happy lot to sweep with delighted eye the valleys that stretched out beyond those ranges; but his sons and his grandsons conquered those tantalizing heights. They went out, north, south, east, and west; climbed one range and caught sight of another; were lured on and on—always by the old, old question; wandered be-

yond reach of each other; lost touch with the old home; settled here and settled there; and so your tribes, your races, your nations, and your empires came to be. It was the other side of the hill that did it.

And if it was the other side of the hill that made them, it was also the other side of the hill that made them great. For the great peoples have been the exploring peoples; and what is exploration but an attempt to discover the land that lies on the other side of the hill? Here, in Australia, explorations began with the conquest of the Blue Mountains. Settlement was confined to a narrow strip of land on the far east of the continent. And there, to the west, were the hills. And every evening, as shepherds and squatters watched the sun set over those huge, rugged peaks, they itched to discover what lay beyond the ranges. Again and again they attempted to solve the eternal secret; again and again they were baulked and defeated. Then came that never-to-be-forgotten day, a hundred years ago, when Blaxland, Lawson, and Wentworth crossed the mountains. They found that a great continent with fertile valleys, spreading plains, and rolling prairies lay on the other side of the hill. And on that memorable day the history of Australia began.

It has been so everywhere. What was the

opening up of America but the constant desire to discover what was on the other side of the hill? Think of that great moment—only twenty-one years after the epoch-making voyage of Columbus—when Vasco Nunez de Balboa

> "With eagle eye
> First stared at the Pacific—and all his men
> Looked at each other with a wild surmise,
> Silent upon a peak in Darien."

Why the "wild surmise"? Simply because they had found an ocean without looking for it! They were not searching for the Pacific; they were simply trying to find out what was on the other side of the hill! That was all.

Yes, that was all; and yet, after all, it is a fine thing to know what is on the other side of the hill. Who can read the fiery theological controversies of days gone by without wishing that each of the angry disputants had been able to peep over the brow of the ridge? Think of the language with which Luther and Calvin assailed each other! Think even of the correspondence of Wesley and Toplady. Wesley, the greatest evangelical force that England has ever known, wrote of the author of "Rock of Ages," "Mr. Augustus Toplady I know well; but I do not fight with chimney-sweeps. He is too dirty a writer for me to meddle with; I should only foul

my fingers." Toplady was quite capable of repaying the founder of Methodism in his own coin. Wesley, he declared, was a hatcher of blasphemies; his forehead was impervious to a blush; he had perpetrated upon the public a known, a wilful, and a palpable lie! But it is too bad of me to drag these amenities of eighteenth-century controversy from the dust that has so long covered them. Let me bury them again at once; and let us remember Wesley only as the greatest spiritual force in the making of modern England, and let us remember Toplady only as the author of our favourite hymn.

For, after all, what do these angry sentences prove? They only prove that, for a little season, neither Wesley nor Toplady was able to see what was on the other side of the hill. I never read a newspaper controversy, or listen to a heated debate, without feeling that. It is so obvious that each of the disputants is standing on his own side of the hill, shouting at his opponent over the ridge that separates them.

"The bush consists principally of *wattle!*" cries A., looking around him at the swaying tassels of gold.

"I tell you that the bush consists principally of *gum!*" replies B., as he hears the flapping of the great strips of bark on every side.

"It is *wattle!*" cries A.

"It is *gum!*" cries B.

"You're distorting the facts!" shrieks A.

"You are telling lies!" returns B. And so the quarrel goes on; both A. and B. getting hotter and angrier as it proceeds. But anybody who stands on the ridge, looking down into both valleys, can see that both are right. On A.'s side the soil and the general conditions favour the growth of the wattle, and the wattle undoubtedly predominates. Just over the hill, the eucalyptus is in its element, and, as a consequence, the blue-gum reigns without a rival there. If only A. and B. could each have taken a peep over the hilltop! If only Calvin could have seen things as they presented themselves to the eye of Luther; and if only Luther could have looked at the universe from Calvin's standpoint! If only Wesley could have taken Toplady by the arm, and they could have walked together first to the one side of the hill and then to the other! If only all our controversialists could be convinced of the very obvious truth that a peak is the meeting-place of two separate valleys! But alas, alas; it is very difficult. So many people seem to suppose that a hilltop crowns one valley and one valley only. So few are willing to see what grows on the other side of the hill.

And yet, for the matter of that, every man knows what is on the other side of the hill. Im-

mensity is on the other side of the hill. Infinity is on the other side of the hill. From my doorstep to the hilltop is a matter of a mile or two at the most; but who can measure in miles the land that lies on the other side of the hill? Between me and the hills lie a cluster of farms; but all the continents and oceans lie over the ranges—on the other side of the hill. Therein lies the consecration and the glory of the Church. On a pinnacle in South America, at the very summit of a lofty range of mountains, an immense statue of Jesus was recently placed. There is a deeper significance in the incident than the sculptors themselves saw. For Christ is always on the hilltops pointing His Church to the immensities beyond. The Church has always inclined towards parochialism; she has contented herself with those few miles that lie between herself and the distant foothills. But the Master has stood ever on the sunlit summit pointing to the infinities beyond. It is the story of Kipling's "Explorer":

"There's no sense in going further—it's the edge of cultivation!
So they said, and I believed it—broke my land and sowed my crop—
Built my barns and strung my fences on the little border station,
Tucked away below the foothills where the trails run out and stop.

Till a voice, as bad as conscience, rang interminable changes,
On one everlasting whisper, day and night repeated—so:
'Something hidden! Go and find it! Go and look behind the ranges!
Something lost behind the ranges! Lost, and waiting for you—GO!'"

"Go," said the Master. "Go ye into all the world." In that tremendous "Go," the Church has caught a glimpse of the other side of the hill, and has herself been saved from narrowness by the discovery.

Yes, immensity and infinity are on the other side of the hill. Immensity and Infinity—and Eternity. That is why the pilgrims of the ages have been struggling with bleeding feet up those precipitous slopes. They hoped that, from the summit, they might catch one satisfying glimpse of the Beyond. Sages and savages alike have gazed with awe at the hilltops, wondering what lay on the other side. No tribe or people has ever been discovered but in some tent or wigwam or kraal there dwelt some priest or fakir or medicine-man who guessed and muttered of the things on the other side of the hill. Oh, the witchery and the mystery of the other side of the hill! Oh, the lure and the fascination of the other side of the hill! There is, I say, a deeper significance in that South American statue than its constructors imagined. For Jesus stands on the hilltop. He

sees what is on our side of the hill, and He sees what is on the other. And, since *He knows,* I need no fakir, no guesser, no medicine-man. He has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. And there He stands! And so long as He commands that eminence, there is no terror for me on either side of the hill.

V

ON THE OLD MAN'S TRAIL

"THIS woman," said Greatheart to Gaius, "is the wife of one Christian, a pilgrim of former times, and these are his four children. The boys take all after their father, and covet to tread in his steps. Yea, if they do but see any place where the old Pilgrim hath lain, or any print of his foot, it ministereth joy to their hearts, and they covet to lie or tread in the same." I always think of that as one of the most charming and affecting passages in the whole of Bunyan's wonderful allegory. *"If they see any place where the old pilgrim hath lain, or any print of his foot, it ministereth joy to their hearts, and they covet to lie or tread in the same."*

Now I believe this sentence of Bunyan's to be the best, and most searching, and most illuminating exposition of a striking question of Paul's. It occurs in the course of one of his most stately and majestic arguments. In the range of that magnificent and monumental passage, some portion of which is read at every Christian burial, the vision of the apostle seems to sweep all

worlds. Nothing is beyond his ken. And he abruptly asks, "*What shall they do who are baptized for the dead?*" Now it is a thousand pities that we should allow this radiant and pregnant phrase to drift among the barren sands and shallow pools of ecclesiastical debate and theological controversy. We must find a place for it in the warm atmosphere of our happiest and most evangelistic ministries. The setting is so exquisitely simple. Paul always felt very acutely that he was a late arrival. He has just said that he came afterwards "as one born out of due time." The romantic day seemed past. He had never companied with Jesus. Perhaps he never saw, except in vision, the Saviour's face. He was distinctly and emphatically representative of a new generation. But he sees that there is room for heroism still. He is determined that the second generation shall be worthy of its predecessor. He himself remembers vividly, and with a shudder, the death of Stephen. He stood by, consenting, perhaps even applauding. He feels now that that unforgettable revelation on the road to Damascus was a call to perpetuate the splendid testimony of those heroic spirits who had fallen—some of them at his own hands. He has been baptized for the dead. Paul was baptized for the dead Stephen, as later on Timothy was baptized for the dead Paul. And so the

world goes on. God buries His workmen, but carries on His work.

The fact is that the principle enshrined in this neglected text is the divine answer to one of the deepest and most tender cravings of which humanity is capable. It is akin to a man's yearning for a child of his own body, a woman's silent and unutterable longing for motherhood. This old world of ours holds nothing more truly and intensely pathetic than a dying man's anxiety about the perpetuation of his life-work. George Eliot has twice portrayed this hunger of the soul with a very delicate and tender touch. Who can read *Romola* and not be affected by the scenes between the blind old philosopher, Bardo, and his vigorous young son, Dino? The aged thinker feels life literally oozing out of him. Every day his body is more frail, his mind less acute. But he delights in the manly strength of Dino, and rejoices in the fond hope that his son will take up the glorious task when at last he lays it down. And the agonizing climax of the old man's grief is reached when Dino repudiates the charge, and leaves his father to die without a successor. It is hard for the standard-bearer to feel the steel of the foe, and to know that there is no other hand to seize the flag as it falls from his dying grasp. Again, in *Daniel Deronda* we have all felt the exultation of the aged Jew who could not

contain his delight that Daniel would echo his voice and continue his work after he was gone. Yes; it is a great thing for Stephen to have his Saul, for Paul to have his Timothy, for the dying man, as he turns his face to the wall, to feel that another has been baptized on his behalf. It is good for a man to make his will, to leave all his affairs in perfect order, to die with no anxiety concerning things in this world or in any other. But surely that man can greet the angel of Death with a radiant face who can point to another—youthful, virile, enthusiastic—who will grasp the tools as they fall from wornout hands and carry the good work to perfect completion. That man rears his own immortality who prudently toils to raise up to himself, whilst his sun is high in the heavens, spiritual successors whose voices will be heard when his sun has set for the last time.

Now a great spirit often does his best work, not in his own proper person, but by means of the disciples who rise up to succeed him and carry on his work. The eighteenth century, for example, was dominated by three very remarkable men—Immanuel Kant, Samuel Johnson, and John Wesley. We owe very much, of course, to the work done by each of them; but we owe still more to the influence which they exerted over their disciples and successors. After the

death of Kant we had a great philosophical revival; after the death of Johnson we had a great literary revival; and after the death of Wesley we had a great religious revival. Johnson died in 1784; Wesley died in 1791; Kant died in 1804. Immediately upon the death of Kant, we have the work of Hegel and Schopenhauer, of Schleiermacher and Herbart, of Goethe and Schelling, of Thomas Brown and Jeremy Bentham, of Sir Thomas Mackintosh and Sir William Hamilton, of Johann Fichte and of many others. In the same way, Dr. Johnson was scarcely buried when there arose Coleridge and Wordsworth, Southey and Lamb, Sir Walter Scott and Thomas Moore, James Hogg and Lord Byron, George Crabbe and Percy Shelley, Thomas Campbell and Walter Savage Landor, Leigh Hunt and John Keats. These, and a host of contemporaries, form a galaxy of literary brilliance unequalled in English story. It is no wonder that when, not long after the death of Johnson, the poet-laureate died, the Government of the day was embarrassed by its wealth of riches and knew not whom to appoint. Of John Wesley exactly the same may be said, save that in his case it would be futile to mention names. Strictly speaking, Wesley was a childless old man when he died; yet we all know that the sons of John Wesley form a host that no man can number. In each

case we are reminded that a really colossal personality often wields a more widespread, if less dramatic, influence through the instrumentality of the disciples who succeed him than is possible to his single individuality.

And, of course, looking at the matter the other way, it is an equally fine thing for a man, with his life all before him, to accept a sacred charge from dying lips. A thought like this was surely surging in the mind of Abraham Lincoln when he dedicated the battlefield of Gettysburg as a place of public burial. "We cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground," he said. "The brave men who struggled here have consecrated it far beyond our power to add or detract. It is for us, the living, rather to be dedicated to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us, that from these honoured dead we may take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion. Let us here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain." It would be very difficult indeed to find a finer exposition of Paul's famous phrase.

Two missionary records occur to me, each of which strikingly illustrates my theme. We have just celebrated the centenary of the opening of

Baptist mission work in the West Indies—a mission that will always be associated with the historic name of William Knibb. But we can never forget the extraordinary way in which William Knibb became the apostle of Jamaica. William Knibb's father had two sons—Thomas and William. Thomas left Kettering to be apprenticed to Mr. Fuller, the friend of Carey, and, catching his missionary enthusiasm, he afterwards sailed for Jamaica. He landed in January, 1823, and died within three months. When the melancholy tidings reached home, William, the younger brother was so impressed by the pathos of it all that he begged to be allowed to go in his brother's place and finish his brother's work. And thus William Knibb was baptized for his dead brother, and became the heroic missionary of that oppressed people and the breaker of their chains. Similarly, in the great days when Dr. Thomas Chalmers was arousing the Church of Scotland to her duty in respect of the heathen world, a young man named John Urquhart was powerfully affected by the burning passion and resistless logic of the great professor's plea. He volunteered to carry the gospel to India, but died before effect could be given to his noble resolve. He had a bosom friend, however, one Alexander Duff. They were as brothers. Duff had never thought seriously of missions, but he

was profoundly moved by the spectacle of his friend's lofty design and its tragic frustration. He hurried home, told his parents what had happened, and asked permission to take up Urquhart's cloak. Consent was given, and Duff went to India in Urquhart's place. He left a name which must be fragrant for evermore. He was baptized for his dead friend.

Now it does seem to me that, without descending to anything that might even appear maudlin or merely sentimental, we have here the groundwork for a very effective evangelistic appeal. Let our preachers call upon their young men in the congregations to perpetuate the integrity of their fathers. Let them challenge the daughters to continue in a fresh generation the piety of their mothers. Who will be baptized for the dead? Who will plant his foot in the prints that the old pilgrim has left? The time has come to dare our young people, to taunt them, to put them on their mettle. In all our churches we find a diminishing band of aged men who, in their day, bore a valiant witness for the truth, and, in many cases, reared the buildings in which we worship. We honour them, and say of them as the Spartan youths said of their grandsires, *"They have been brave!"* And most of us are surrounded by excellent and devout men, who hold office in our churches to-day. These, too, we honour with

grateful delight. We owe them much. *"They are brave!"* But when we look around for the next generation of stalwarts, it must be confessed, without yielding to pessimism or panic, that things are not so promising. The multiplication of popular pleasures is working sad havoc. They are few upon whom we can look with pride and say, *"These will be brave!"* But let us sound this new note! Let us tell of the splendid heroism and noble self-sacrifice and beautiful devotion of their fathers. And as, with one hand, we point to the honoured graves of the standard-bearers who have fallen in the fight, and, with the other, to the battle still hotly contested and still unwon, surely, surely, surely we shall discover those whose memories will twine themselves about the tender grace of a day that is dead, and whose soul will respond with eagerness to so searching and pathetic a challenge! Let us say to them, "Elijah, my servant, is translated: now therefore arise!" and peradventure Elisha will step forth and claim the mantle that has fallen. Let us say to them, "Moses, my servant, is dead: now therefore arise, and lead my people Israel!" and peradventure Joshua will step into the breach! It may be that some young pilgrim will plant his foot in the old man's prints! Let us dare men, by the graves of their sires, to be solemnly baptized for the dead.

VI

SANDY

Old Sandy McAlister was a perfect godsend to his minister; and, in his own peculiar way, he rendered the church most excellent service. Mosgiel is a scattered district, and Sandy lived some distance from the church. He was not strong; and his attendance depended to a large extent on the state of the weather and the condition of the roads. I confess that it took me a good while to fathom Sandy. He said very little; and somehow I came to think of him as a man with a secret. I was not far out, as this record will show. I knew Sandy for years before I discovered the hidden depths of sweetness and chivalry that his brusque and rugged exterior so cleverly concealed. That is one of the delights of a lengthy pastorate. It takes a long time to get to know some of the most lovable people. Had I left Mosgiel after three years, I should have cherished no amiable memory of Sandy. As it is, I stayed long enough to find him out; and he became one of my fastest and most confidential friends.

It was a queer little house in which Sandy lived all by himself. He had been a widower for many years; of children he had none. He had neither the means nor the inclination to engage a housekeeper; and he was too fond of his own little ways to seek board and residence with others. And so he lived alone in his little two-roomed cottage—his "but and ben," as he called it. The cottage lay back from the road with all the garden in front. Sandy was no aesthetic. He had a frugal mind. I can see now the tall rows of French-beans; the sprawling marrow plants; the tangle of potato haulms; the beds of gigantic cabbages punctuated here and there by the headless stalks of those that had surrendered dear life for Sandy's sake. Sandy took inordinate pride in these departments of horticulture. I remember his taking me out by moonlight to admire a magnificent cauliflower; and, in winter time, when the snow had buried his frozen garden, he would sit in his rocking-chair by the glowing fire and glance lovingly at the enormous vegetable marrows that reposed on a shelf near by. Save for the roses that clambered over the porch, and a tall row of yellow sunflowers that flourished near the fence, Sandy devoted no attention to flowers.

Although he was frail, and a martyr to rheumatism, Sandy was rarely ill. Once or twice I

visited him in his "ben"; but it was usually in the other room that he and I overhauled the universe. I always occupied the rocking-chair on these occasions. Not all the coaxing or cajolery in the world would persuade Sandy to take that chair when his minister was in the house. I tried once or twice to wheedle him into it, but I found him adamantine. "It wudna be recht," he used to say; so I capitulated, and, ever afterwards, followed the line of least resistance and took the rocking-chair as a matter of course. It was more than forty years since he left the Homeland; but he always had something to say about Scotland. The latest Hawick newspaper was never far from his chair, and it was from that geographical standpoint that he looked out upon the world. He was fond of history, although I sometimes fancied that his sense of proportion was slightly defective. To him, Waterloo was a mere skirmish in comparison with Bannockburn; whilst to the puny heroes of whom I sometimes talked so glibly, he would introduce Bruce and Wallace, like a pair of monstrous colossi, and all my idols were dwarfed and shamed out of countenance. It was good for me; it humbled my southern pride; it made me feel how jaundiced my English view of things had evidently become. And if, in an unguarded moment, I rashly referred to some mere lowland poet, that pale and sickly

luminary was instantly extinguished by the dazzling effulgence of Burns!

I noticed as soon as I settled at Mosgiel that, although Sandy was frequently absent from the ordinary services, he was invariably in his place at the business meetings of the church. Even on bleak wintry nights, when he had to fight his way along muddy roads through a perfect hurricane of rain or sleet, he was always there. I marvelled at this, for Sandy was not fond of debate. He took his seat against the wall, and manifested only the most languid interest in all that was being said and done. Sometimes he did not even trouble to vote. It was some little time before I could lay my hand on any clue to the mystery. But one night Sandy actually spoke. I had introduced the names of several candidates for membership. In only one case was there the slightest hesitancy. Alan Fairmaid had been something of a scapegrace in the neighbourhood. The change from the old life to the new was so sudden as to savour, in the judgment of some, of impetuosity. It was suggested that he should be subjected to a probationary period of three or four months. If, at the end of that time, he still ran well, receive him by all means. Owen Davids, a Welsh sailor, who had had experiences of his own, was on his feet in a moment.

"Mr. Chairman," he said, "if Alan gets the idea

into his head that we suspect him, it will do him a lot of harm. We've got to take a risk. If we receive him straight away, we run the risk that he may disappoint us and prove unworthy of our fellowship. If we receive the other candidates, but place him on probation, we may discourage him and turn him back to his old ways. In the first case we have our remedy; in the second, we have none. I move that all the candidates be approved."

It was the case of Paul and Barnabas over again. There was something to be said for taking Mark, and something to be said for leaving him. I admired those who were jealous for the honour of the church, and I admired those who trembled for the soul of Alan Fairmaid. At the critical moment, Sandy arose. I was amazed. I had no idea that he had it in him to make a speech.

"Mr. Chairman," he said, "there is no Communion Service for over a fortnight, so that even if we pass these names to-night they cannot be welcomed until then. I move that this meeting stand adjourned until this night fortnight, and I shall make it my business to see Alan in the meantime."

The proposal was eagerly adopted. During the next fortnight Sandy and Alan were inseparable. Twice of an evening I strolled along the grassy

road to the little cottage behind the French-beans and the sunflowers, and on each occasion I found Alan in the chair opposite Sandy. And when the church assembled for its adjourned meeting, Sandy had such a glowing tale to tell of the times that Alan and he had spent together that the name was passed without the utterance of another word. All the candidates—Alan among them—were welcomed to fellowship at the Communion Service on the following Sunday evening; the fortnight's intercourse between Sandy and Alan ripened into a fast and lifelong friendship; and Alan adorned for many years the membership and service of the Mosgiel church.

Sandy made that his life-work. He was the champion of all doubtful cases. It was not that he wished to oppose those who counselled caution. He recognized that their alarm in certain cases pointed to circumstances of special peril in the candidates—circumstances that naturally awakened such serious apprehension. And Sandy felt himself called to prevent a collapse. He therefore devoted his attention to those points at which a collapse was most to be feared. I remember strolling down to the cottage one evening and finding five of the younger members of the church sitting with him. One of the girls had brought him a lovely bunch of flowers, and had daintily arranged them on the table-centre.

Sandy's big Bible was lying open near him, and I guessed that he had been making good use of his opportunity. As I glanced round the room at the faces lit up by the firelight, the first thing that struck me was that each of Sandy's guests had been the subject of the gravest misgiving when the name was first submitted to the church. And very possibly those sinister alarms would have been fully justified by subsequent events—if it had not been for Sandy. As it turned out, however, Sandy's protégés invariably proved our most loyal and most devoted workers.

The illness that took Sandy from us was not a long one. I was out visiting in the township one afternoon when, looking down the long straight road, I was surprised to see the doctor's gig standing at Sandy's gate. I was soon at his side; but he did not take his sickness seriously. Indeed, he was rather more talkative than usual. He was in a reminiscent mood.

"I've been thinking about auld times," he said, as he took my hand. "I've never told you how it came about that I first joined a church. Go and get the rocking-chair, and put it beside the bed, and I'll tell ye all aboot it!"

I brought the rocking-chair from the "but" to the "ben," placed it so that I sat facing him, and he went on with his story.

"Weel, ye ken," he continued, lapsing, as he

often did, into his native brogue, "I was gey wild in my early days. But the guid Lord had mercy on Sandy, and I asked the meenister if I could join the kirk. He shook his head, and said that it would have to be considered very carefully. A few weeks afterwards he told me that I had been put on probation, and that if I did well my application would be again considered. It was like a wet blanket. I was wrong and wicked to think it; but I felt that they did not want me, and I went back to my auld companions and my auld life. It was ten years before I ever troubled the kirk again; and those ten years were the most wretched years that I ever spent. I never kneel down beside this auld bed without asking the good Lord to blot out the memory of those dreadful years. And now ye ken why I took a wee bit interest in Alan Fairmaid and the ither lads and lasses. I canna do much; but if I could save a single one of them from years like those ten years of mine I should feel that I had dune a guid day's work."

It was the last talk I ever had with him. At his funeral I spoke for a few moments on The Glory of the Rearguard—that obscure detachment that follows the army, gathers up all the stragglers, and saves all those who would otherwise fall out. Sandy left nothing—he had lived on a little pension that lapsed with his death—

but a few of his admirers erected a modest stone above his grave. And I noticed that, in raising that monument, Alan Fairmaid and the young people I met in Sandy's room were among the largest contributors.

VII

THE ENCHANTED COAT

I HAVE met it three times now—that romance of invisibility. As a small boy, I came across it in a fairy-tale. How vividly it all comes back to me! That was a great day in my little life. When I scrambled out of bed and looked out of the window, the earth was buried deep in snow, and the flakes were still falling thick and fast. At the breakfast-table a lively debate took place as to whether it was safe for me to go to school. The spirit of adventure seized me: I should feel like a polar explorer; I begged to be allowed to go. I well remember fighting my way through the storm and the snowdrifts; and when I at length reached the half-buried school there were not a dozen of us there. "We can't have classes," said the schoolmaster; "you had better go to the library and get some books and sit round the stove and read them!"

It so happened that I had been school librarian the week before; and in overhauling my library charges I had discovered a volume of fairy-tales.

I knew just where to lay my hand upon it. What a day I had! But it all turned upon that invisible coat. How could Jack have conquered the giant; how could he have slain the dragon; how could he have escaped from the ogre's bone-littered dungeon; how could he have rescued the charming princess whom he afterwards married, but for that enchanted garment? He had but to throw it over his shoulders and, like a flash, both it and he were instantly invisible. How I chuckled, as I sat beside the stove that day, in the enjoyment of Jack's magic secret. I watched the most gruesome and terrible monsters draw near to destroy him; but I felt a wild, unutterable joy in their stealthy approach, for I knew that, at the critical moment, Jack's wondrous coat would wave above his head and the horrid brutes would be destroyed. I felt my cheeks flush with excitement; and all mundane things—even the deepening snow—were millions of miles away. If I had possessed that enchanted coat myself, it could scarcely have afforded me more pleasure. It was a great experience.

I left the fairy-tales behind me in the old library cupboard at school, but not the enchanted coat. I met it again in Plato. Every reader of the *Republic* remembers the ring of Gyges. Gyges, according to the philosopher, discovered a wondrous ring which, when placed upon the

finger and turned in a certain direction, rendered the wearer totally invisible. Here again was the old story, that I first read beside the stove, reappearing in a slightly altered form.

A year or so ago I came upon it yet once more. I one day bought everything that Mr. H. G. Wells has written, his *Invisible Man* among the rest. Here is a man who discovers some chemical secret, and he straightway becomes invisible. "I shall never forget," he says, "the strange horror of seeing my hands become as clouded glass and watching them grow clearer and thinner as the days went by, until at last I could see the sickly disorder of my room through them, though I closed my transparent eyelids. My limbs became glassy; the bones and arteries faded, vanished." He was invisible! I need not recount the adventures that followed. But, clearly, here we have Jack's enchanted coat and the ring of Gyges over again.

Now, strange to say, this thrice-told tale has had an effect upon me exactly the opposite to that which might have been expected. Instead of making me yearn for an enchanted coat like that of Jack, or for a magic ring like that of Gyges, or for a chemical secret like that of Mr. H. G. Wells's hero, I have been made to feel that a good substantial body—immune from all possibility of invisibility—is a very useful contrivance

to carry about with you. I know that it is generally considered the correct thing to abuse the body and to call it ugly names. I dare say that, like myself, it has its seamy side; but at this moment I am more disposed to dwell on the other phase of the picture. Circumstanced as I now am, a body is a distinct convenience. That it has material advantages, any one can see. I am afraid that my friends would cut me dead on the street if I ventured forth without it. They could scarcely be expected to recognize me. Like the address at the heading of my note-paper, my body enables my friends to locate me. It proclaims to all and sundry my precise whereabouts. If I form the bad habit of writing my letters on paper that bears no address, my correspondents will be compelled to direct their replies by guesswork. As a natural and inevitable consequence, their communications will go wandering about the world, and perhaps never find me. In the same way, if I contract the vicious habit of going out of an afternoon without my body, I shall plunge my friends into endless confusion. Think of the difficulties that must be theirs when they attempt to converse with me! I can imagine the start that Jones will give when, seeing him standing on the post-office steps, I approach and bid him good-day! I can fancy the wild, distressful glances that he will hastily bestow upon all

the points of the compass as he sweeps the horizon in search of the owner of the voice that has so startled him. I shall soon be able to put him at his ease by explaining that I have inadvertently left my body in the study; but the awkwardness will remain. Passers-by will naturally suppose that he has taken leave of his senses. They will see him gazing into empty space conversing all the time with characteristic animation, and they will exchange significant looks with one another, tapping their foreheads as they do so. Moreover, it is conceivable that my departure will be as unknown to poor Jones as my approach, and he will still be addressing me on the post-office steps whilst, as a matter of fact, I am a quarter of a mile farther up the street. The position will be decidedly uncomfortable.

But it is not the mere matter of discomfort that has most impressed me. I am convinced that my body serves a moral as well as a material purpose. I am a better man for having a body to carry about with me. I hear people speak of the body as though it acted as a brake upon goodness. It may occasionally do so; but far more often it acts as a restraint upon badness. Take our criminal courts. What has led to the arrest of these men? Was it not the fact that they were under the necessity of carrying their bodies about with them? Had they possessed Jack's

enchanted coat, they could have outraged the law with impunity. Let us suppose, for the sake of an illustration, that I am tempted to become a burglar. There is really only one serious difficulty. If it were not for that one difficulty we should have a hundred times as many burglaries as now trouble us. I need scarcely add that that one supreme difficulty is my body. Nature, bent on dissuading me from becoming a burglar, says to me, "Well, if you have really made up your mind to earn your living by breaking into other people's houses, you must take your body with you wherever you go!" It is a terrible condition for Nature to impose upon me. My body weighs, let us say, at least a hundredweight. Here am I, about to fare forth on an exceedingly delicate business, a business in which secrecy and silence are absolutely essential to success, and Nature compels me to carry a hundredweight of solid matter with me as I go! You might as well attire an athlete in a suit of mail before starting him on his race! I shall have to drag that hundredweight of flesh from my house to the house that I propose to rob, and the wretched thing will make a noise all the way. Under its weight twigs will snap, gravel will crunch, stones will rattle, floors will scroop, stairs will creak, and a multitude of echoes will be started by such a cumbrous load. All sorts of accusing and incriminating

noises will be made, and any one of them may prove my undoing. Moreover, my body appeals not only to the ear, but to the eye. Nature says to me, "If you dare to attempt a burglary, you will have to take your body with you, and then *somebody will see it!*" You can see what she is driving at: she means to turn me from my evil purpose. A body is such an easy target for a prying eye. My only chance—since I must needs take it with me—is to go about my felonious task at dead of night, wrapping up my body in inky darkness. When I see anybody approaching, I must instantly hide it in a culvert or behind a hedge. It is a horrible thing to be bothered with, and multiplies the chances of detection immeasurably. Thinking it over in this way, I find the risks are too great, and I decide that a burglarious life is not the life for me. As a matter of fact, thousands decide in that way, and for the selfsame reasons. It is just because a burglar is obliged to take his body with him wherever he goes that so few men, comparatively speaking, become burglars.

I confess that when I was a little fellow, gloating over Jack's famous exploits with his fairy-coat, I thought that such a garment, if I could only get hold of it, would represent a very valuable addition to my wardrobe. But that was obviously a very small boy's way of looking at

things. By the time that I came upon Gyges and his ring I had grown wiser. I could not help noticing that, although Gyges intended to use his magic power wisely and well, the temptations that it suggested were too much for him; and before he knew what had happened he had committed every crime in the calendar. This left on my mind a mere hazy and uncomfortable impression; but that impression was crystallized into conviction when I came to Mr. H. G. Wells. His *Invisible Man* started innocently enough; but when the rascal found that he could do what he would without the slightest fear of detection, he stole, plundered, and murdered until everybody longed for the day when earth should be rid of so terrible a monster.

I then made up my mind, once and for all, that there are considerable advantages, of a moral and ethical character, in being visible, audible, tangible, incarnate. And when I read, as I sometimes do, the anonymous letters that appear in our newspapers, the feeling comes back upon me. The anonymity of a newspaper is the nearest approach to an enchanted coat or a magic ring that I know. It enables a man to act and speak without being seen at all. And, somehow, very few men seem able to avail themselves of that peculiar privilege without being horribly spiteful. As soon as human nature flings an en-

chanted coat over its shoulders, it becomes instantly malicious. The spirit of a man is safest when embodied. When I can be trusted without a body I shall no doubt be permitted to lay that encumbrance aside. For the present I need a body for the preservation of my character and the salvation of my soul. I dare not fancy the depths of degradation into which I might descend if I were relieved of the flesh that is wrapped around me. And was not the redemption of the world achieved not by a disembodiment, but by an incarnation? Who can say hard things about his body after that?

VIII

COMPANIONS OF THE BUSH[1]

With the *Companionship of the Bath* I never expect to be honoured in this world, but to the *Companionship of the Bush* I was admitted years ago. There are mystic rites of initiation of which only bushmen know; secret sights and sounds that would convey no meaning to those who have never cultivated the intimacy of these vast Australian solitudes, but which, to the confidants of the forest, are pregnant with wealthy significance and instinct with wondrous symbolism. An Englishman who saw this house from which I write, perched as it is like an eyrie on the cliffs, would take it for granted that I was entirely destitute of anything in the nature of companionship. Here I sit, looking out upon a lonely sea, whilst the great virgin bush clothes all the plains and slopes around me. This is the eighth long, delightful holiday that I have spent here, and the better I know the spot the more do

[1] The "Companions of the Bush" first made their appearance in the columns of the *Christian World;* and I gratefully acknowledge the courtesy of the editor of that journal in permitting me to provide them, in this volume, with a permanent home.—F. W. B.

I marvel at those who could suppose that I was lonely. I have, it is true, left the world behind me. The scream of railway-trains, the shout of newsboys, and the hum of city life are miles and miles away. If, in the course of my rambles, I chance to fall and break my leg, the task of getting myself found, and then of arranging for a barge to take me forty miles over a rough sea to a doctor, will present difficulties of its own; but who bothers his head about such morbid possibilities? In exchange for the crowds of the city I have the companions of the bush. Allow me to introduce you.

First of all, let us go down to the beach. Come with me along this narrow track through the scrub, and down over the cliff on to the sands. That sudden hissing noise? Oh, it is nothing—just an army of crabs, thousands and thousands of them, frightened out of their wits by our invasion of their domain, and all trying to bury themselves in the sand at the same time. But look out there at the water's edge! On the fringe of the sandpit stand twelve grey storks. They look as solemn as judges, although their number is more reminiscent of juries. They strut sedately up and down, stooping occasionally to devour some tasty morsel that the lapping waves fling at their feet. Let us go nearer. They will allow us to approach within fifty yards of them, and

then away they go all together, their long legs trailing out behind them. They will not fly far, for they know we mean them no harm. A couple of hundred yards along the shore they settle again, and go on fishing as serenely and silently as though we had never disturbed them.

A strange contrast to the solemn, silent storks are the noisy parrots up there in the blue-gums. Parrots of many kinds and colours flock to these giant trees around the house. They seem as fond of human companionship as the magpies that cluster round the door. In these trees I have brought down at one shot three fine birds of most exquisite and brilliant plumage, and have felt ashamed of the havoc that I have wrought until I remembered that the farmers and orchardists away back would unite in blessing me. The noisy birds in the branches above us just now, however, are big grey parrots, with black faces, and their sombre garb is in striking contrast with the gay feathers of those that sometimes visit us.

Returning to the house, I must introduce you to Darby and Joan. Darby and Joan, be it known by these presents, are the two large iguanas who make their home under the floor of the back verandah. Darby is about eighteen inches long; Joan is an inch or two shorter. On a warm day like this you will generally find them

out in the sun within twenty yards of their base. Here, surely enough, is Darby just creeping into the woodshed. A big, plump, scaly thing he is, shining in the bright sunlight, his furtive, restless little eyes watching you with evident suspicion. He is a repulsive creature. Stoop to stroke him, or to pick him up, and he will look savagely at you, and dart out his long blue tongue with lightning rapidity. But when you get to know him you will ignore such threats and handle him as you will. They say that he is more than a match for the deadliest snake in the bush, but I have never known of any human being being harmed by him; and I have seen boys maul a poor iguana in such a way that, had I been the iguana, I would have bitten if I could!

I should like you to meet Jack, but Jack is wofully shy. Jack, you know, is the bandicoot (*perameles obesula*) that lives in the scrub about a hundred yards along the track behind the house. I usually come upon him as I return to the house in the gloaming. He sits under a wisp of scrub right on the edge of the track until I am almost up to him, and then away he goes—hop, hop, hop—through the grasses and up the bank. The uninitiated might mistake him in the semi-darkness for a rabbit; but there is a great difference. A rabbit, getting out of your way, goes a few yards—lippety-lip, lippety-lip, lippety-lip

—and then pauses to take fresh observations, his little white tail betraying his identity all the time. But Jack never behaves so foolishly. When once he starts, he goes on and on, jumping on his hind legs like a kangaroo, until he is well out of your sight. Your only chance of observing him closely is just before he starts. He sits up staring at you. How wise he looks, with his long nose, long whiskers, and cunning little eyes! "Here, Jack, don't be frightened! We won't hurt you!" But Jack takes no risks. There he goes!

I was strolling along the track the other day, a quarter of a mile or so from the house, when I came on old Bristles, the porcupine or ant-eater (*echidna aculeata*). Such a rustle and a clatter he was making in the undergrowth that a deaf man could scarcely have missed him. I stepped towards him, and he almost dived into solid earth. The rapidity with which he can hide himself even in the hardest ground is incredible. With the greatest difficulty and by the exertion of all my strength I at last turned him out with my stick, and holding him by his hind foot—the only safe handle—held him up for examination, and then, having passed the time of day, I set him down, and he vanished, as if by magic, before you could say Jack Robinson.

I have left Satan until the last. Satan is the big black snake who lives down by the gate. I

have never seen Satan, but every day I see his wriggling track across the sand by the gate, and a friend once caught sight of the flash of his tail as it vanished in the fern. That is the one redeeming feature of our Australian snakes. They are the deadliest in the world, and they are evidently plentiful. I find their tracks everywhere, but I have never seen one yet. Dead ones I have found, and skins that have been sloughed, but never a real live snake. I have brought the children here, and sent them scampering through the bush in search of orchids, and although they have scoured hills and valleys for weeks on end, no one of them has ever come upon a snake. The whole place swarms with them; a bite means almost certain death; and yet so elusive are the reptiles that the bush is almost as safe as an English common. I suppose more children die of wasp-stings in England than of snake-bites in Australia. We have no wasps.

I have said nothing about my maritime companions. From the boat I sometimes look down into clear, translucent depths, and, among the magnificent forestry far down in the waters, I see fish by the thousand. From the shark, fifteen feet long—who sometimes lies alongside and stares at me, and then goes gracefully away through the depths beneath—to the swarms of perch and cod, trevally and trumpeter, mackerel

and flathead, the sea is simply moving with fish. Here is the food supply of our sojourn in the bush.

These are the Companions of the Bush; but there are K.C.B.'s as well as C.B.'s. Let me tell of two. Two or three miles over the hill there I could take you to a lonely orchard. As you approached the house a gentle English lady would come out to meet you; and if you told her that you also came from England it would be some minutes before she could speak to you. Is she sorry that she left the crowded homeland for this solitude amidst the wilds? She is too brave to say "Yes," but it takes the heart of a lion to leave all the dear associations of the old country and settle down in a desolate spot like this. The women of the bush! As George Essex Evans sang:

"The red sun robs their beauty, and, in weariness and gain,
The slow years steal the nameless grace that never comes again;
And there are hours men cannot soothe, and words men cannot say—
The nearest woman's face may be a hundred miles away."

I know a little shanty a few miles farther back. I should scarcely have noticed it, but I saw a bullock wagon drop a big box under a bluegum-tree beside the track. Presently I saw a young fellow not much bigger than the box emerge from

the trees, pick up the box, and stagger off with it. I called to him. He was a Lancashire lad. He had come out by himself, penetrated into these wilds, taken up this selection, burned down the bush, torn up the stumps, ploughed the soil and planted an orchard, with never a soul to break the silence or listen to his voice. The box contained his stores for another month. He carried it through the bush and up the hill to the little one-roomed house that he had built for himself. We talked for awhile of England before we parted, and his eyes moistened. "Are you sorry you came out?" I asked him. "No," he answered; "this is the place for a young fellow. It's grand to be opening up a new country!" If there had been another present I would have called for three cheers. Three cheers for the pioneers—three cheers for the K.C.B.'s!

IX

THE MAN IN THE MOON

It is high time that I turned my attention to this extremely eminent personage. It is usual to say that one knows no more about a thing than the Man in the Moon. But this constant assumption of the ignorance of the Man in the Moon is—like so many of our assumptions—a baseless fallacy. Depend upon it, there are some things of which the Man in the Moon knows far more than we do—the moon itself, for example. The Man in the Moon is absolutely unique in that particular. He is the one man in the entire universe who cherishes no illusions about the moon. Everybody else has been moonstruck at some time or other. Did not Du Maurier declare that we all haunt the moon until we are forty? But at that age we begin to content ourselves with the drab commonplaces of dear old Mother Earth; and then, for the first time, we really enjoy ourselves. There may be a spice of pardonable exaggeration in the statement; but it is not all exaggeration. Paul says, in the course of one of his most stately and tremendous arguments, that there are celes-

tial bodies, and there are bodies terrestrial. If I may wrest his words from their context, and use them in a sense slightly different from that in which he employed them, I should state the distinction in this way: celestial bodies circle, for the most part, round the sun; terrestrial bodies circle, for the most part, round the moon. Look, for example, at our literature. What budding poet would have the temerity to address himself to any other theme until he had written an ode to the moon? Or what novelist would dare to write a triumphant "Finis" on the last sheet of his ponderous manuscript unless that manuscript somewhere contained a vivid description of an affecting and romantic moonlight scene? Or what composer would dream of attempting more serious work until he had committed himself to a moonlight sonata? Or what aspiring artist would think of proceeding to other subjects until he had expressed his soul in a picture of "The Bay by Moonlight"? The thing is out of the question; it would be a flagrant defiance of all the great historic precedents; an iconoclastic outrage of the eternal fitness of things. Literature and music and art are drenched in moonbeams and saturated with lunar effects. What with the harvest moon, the crescent moon, the rising moon, the waning moon, the clouded moon, and the silvery moon,

our literature seems to resolve itself into a kind of moonlight serenade. We are hopelessly moon-struck. I am afraid there is no escape from that unamiable conclusion. But we are only in love with the moon because we do not know the moon. We sing our love-songs to the moon—at a distance; and distance lends enchantment to the view. No man who has ever lived on the moon would dream for a single moment of writing an ode to it. No man who has ever really seen the moon would talk any more about moonlight effects. You will never persuade the Man in the Moon to wax sentimental on the subject. Sir J. W. Dawson, the great geologist, describes the moon as a dry, dead, withered world. The lugubrious Ko-Ko, in speculating as to the possibility of falling in love with the elderly and faded Katisha, reminds himself that

> "There's a fascination frantic
> In a ruin that's romantic,"

but I fancy that even he would draw the line at a "dry, dead, withered" affair! Who can get up any enthusiasm for a world that is blasted, burnt-up, played-out, exhausted, desolate, and cold? Any man who has spent five minutes on the moon knows that it is the most dreary, dismal world that swims in space; a world in which no flower ever blooms, in which no bird ever sings, in which

no dewdrop ever glistens, in which no brightness or beauty are ever seen. It is a weird and monstrous wilderness—arid, grey, silent, and monotonous; with nothing to make it tempting and nothing to make it terrible. It is sullen, sinister, sardonic, and grim. And this is the world, may it please you, to which we address our odes and sonatas! The Man in the Moon knows better. If he sang any song he would sing Cowper's

> "I am out of humanity's reach,
> I must finish my journey alone,
> Never hear the sweet music of speech;
> I start at the sound of my own.
> Oh Solitude! where are the charms
> That sages have seen in thy face?
> Better dwell in the midst of alarms
> Than reign in this horrible place!"

The Man in the Moon is the one man in the entire universe in whose brain the moon inspires no illusions.

I am scarcely prepared at this moment to enter into biographical details concerning the Man in the Moon, although I am not totally destitute of information. In a lonely part of the Waikato district of New Zealand, I once met an old Maori who seemed to have known the Man in the Moon pretty intimately. As he leaned against a giant kauri that had recently been felled, this tattooed and war-scarred veteran assured me that the

Man in the Moon was once a New Zealander. It flashed upon me that peradventure it was none other than Macaulay's famous New Zealander—the New Zealander who, according to the historian, is one day to take his stand on a broken arch of London Bridge and sketch the ruins of St. Paul's! Is it possible that, beneath some lunar influence, he has lost his way to London and landed on the moon? And does he fancy as he pensively gazes on the charred and battered débris that litters the surface of that soulless orb, that these shapeless piles of ashes represent all that remains of the proud British metropolis? But when I had heard the entire narration, I saw that this ingenious hypothesis would scarcely square with my old Maori's story. For, once upon a time, he explained, a certain chief, whose name was Utuhina, was on a journey. He pressed on and on, but came upon no water, and his tongue was swollen with thirst. But, on a bright moonlight night, as he thridded a deep and wooded valley, he heard the silvery laughter of a stream. The bush was dense, and he could scarcely see his way from one tree to another. But it was moonlight, and he struggled on. Just as he was approaching the musical water, however, a great cloud veiled the face of the moon, and he could see nothing. Then Utuhina shook his fist at the sky, and cursed the moon that

would not help him to the hidden stream. And then, as soon as the cloud had passed, the moon came down, seized Utuhina, and threatened to bear him away. Poor Utuhina clutched a tree in his terror, but the moon was too strong for him. She carried him off, tree and all; and if any Maori child is so sceptical as to doubt the story, all that he has to do is to take a good look on a clear moonlight night, and there, in the moon, he can see Utuhina for himself, still bearing the tree about with him!

I give the story exactly as I received it: I cannot, of course, vouch for its historicity. But assuming, for the sake of argument, that the Man in the Moon is an earthman who has been transferred to, or stranded on, that drear abode, I wonder what he thinks of our rhapsodies about the moon! As he remembers the enchanting loveliness of the sphere from which he was so rudely snatched, and as he surveys the maddening gloom of the charnel-house to which he has been exiled, I wonder what he thinks of our odes and our romances, our pictures and our sonatas. As Utuhina recalls the snow-capped mountains, the evergreen bush, and the magnificent landscapes upon which he gazed in the course of that last fatal journey in New Zealand, and as he surveys the barren horrors of his lunar landscapes, I wonder if he feels inclined to write

sentimental songs about the moon! If we only saw things in their true perspective, we should discover that our very ability to break into poetry on such a theme is itself an eloquent tribute to the charms of the world on which we live. Jud Brownin, in his familiar account of Rubinstein's playing, says that the illustrious pianist made him feel that he had fallen in love with somebody—he didn't know whom! Precisely! It was the music that did it. His confession of tenderness for some person or persons unknown is his tribute to the witchery of the player. And, in precisely the same way, our sentimentality about the moon is simply the outflowing of those waves of inspiration which have swept over us as we have feasted our eyes upon the beauty of our own world.

Southey tells of a curious dream that once visited him. He dreamed that the Man in the Moon was dead, and that everybody was competing for the vacant place. The poet seems to imagine that there is something grotesque about the notion; but he is mistaken. Nothing could be more true to life. If he had asked me to tell him the dream and the interpretation thereof, my task would have been a very simple one. For I am certain that if the Man in the Moon were to absent himself for any length of time from his accustomed place; and if the proper authorities

gave permission to assume that death had taken place; and if application for the vacant post were to be publicly invited, the post offices would be glutted with the stacks of communications that would instantly pour in. For everybody wants to be the Man in the Moon. That is the explanation of the ebb and flow of population that is so prominent a characteristic of our own time. We are always on the move. We are afflicted by a chronic weariness of our actual conditions and a chronic yearning after some ideal conditions that never were and never will be. Hundreds of times I have visited families that were leaving the district for fresh fields and pastures new. As they compared the conditions they were quitting with those they were embracing, how drab seemed the old life, how romantic seemed the new! In each instance I recognized the old, old story. The Man in the Moon was dead, and here were the people who had been appointed to the vacant place! Scores of times I have discussed the situation with ministers who were leaving one pastorate for another. In nearly every case I could see at once that the good man was going to be private chaplain to the Man in the Moon! The church that he was leaving had so many drawbacks; it was of the earth, earthy. But the church to which he was going! Oh, that church to which he was going!

The Man in the Moon very rarely goes to church. It is extremely important that I should state this with the utmost clearness, not for the sake of casting a slur upon the character of the Man in the Moon, but as a hint to myself and to my brother ministers. For, truth to tell, I have sometimes fancied that our sermons were prepared on the assumption that the Man in the Moon will be the only person present. The questions we discuss are not human questions; the problems with which we deal are not human problems; the language we speak is no human language. It may be lunar; I am not sure. But, however that may be, it is all addressed to the Man in the Moon.

Think of Thomas Chalmers. The most sensational discovery of his life was the discovery that for more than twelve years he had been preaching sermons at Kilmany that bore no relationship whatever to the actual lives of the people to whom he ministered. For more than twelve years the parish minister at Kilmany had been preaching to the Man in the Moon! Then came the great awakening. Chalmers was seized by sudden illness. During his convalescence his mind underwent what he himself called a great revolution. He found the Saviour, and entered into an experience of which he had previously never dreamed. It is difficult to read with dry

eyes his own telling account of that great transformation. In due time he returned to his pulpit. The people were electrified. The minister was no longer preaching to the Man in the Moon; he was preaching to the men of Kilmany! And Kilmany was touched to tears in consequence. "He would bend over the pulpit," says an old hearer, "and press us to take the gift as if he held it that moment in his hand and could not be satisfied till every one of us got possession of it!" The effect was instantaneous. As long as Chalmers preached to the Man in the Moon, the Man in the Moon made not the slightest response; but when he preached to the men of Kilmany, Kilmany became a new village.

PART II

I

FORGETFUL GREEN

A BOY'S insatiable curiosity may occasionally serve a very useful end. Certainly, if it had not been for the sprightly inquisitiveness of Samuel, one of the sons of Christiana, we should never have known the name of the place at which Christian fought with Apollyon. In the classical story of that famous struggle the name of the locality is nowhere disclosed. But when Christiana set out on pilgrimage, she, motherlike, took her boys with her. And boys will be boys. They poked into a hundred places that she would never have troubled to notice, and asked their guide a hundred questions that would never have occurred to her. Poor Christiana never thought without a shudder of her husband's terrible encounter with the fiend; and the less she heard about it the better. But the story of their father's triumph was very much to the taste of the boys, and their whys and wherefores were innumerable.

"Sir," said Samuel, "I perceive that in this valley my father and Apollyon had their battle; but whereabout was the fight? for I perceive that this valley is large."

"Your father had that battle with Apollyon at a place yonder, before us, in a narrow passage just beyond Forgetful Green. And indeed that place is the most dangerous place in all these parts. For if at any time the pilgrims meet with any brunt, it is when they forget what favours they have received, and how unworthy they are of them. This is the place also where others have been hard put to it. But more of the place when we are come to it; for I persuade myself that to this day there remains either some sign of the battle, or some monument to testify that such a battle there was fought."

And, surely enough, when they came to Forgetful Green, there stood the monument!

Forgetful Green, said Greatheart, *is the most dangerous place in all these parts,* and he was not the first person to say so. Moses wrote a whole book on the subject. In the old days men did not consider it essential that a book should bear an attractive title. The book that Moses wrote is therefore known as The Book of Deuteronomy. If it had been written nowadays, it would have been entitled "The Dangers of Forgetful Green." Anybody who takes the trouble to glance through it will see at once that that is its natural title. Every chapter urges the importance of not forgetting. "Beware lest thou forget the Lord which brought thee up from the

land of Egypt." "Beware lest thou forget the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt." "Beware lest thou forget that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt." "Beware lest thou forget all the way which the Lord thy God hath led thee." "Beware lest thou forget what the Lord thy God did unto Pharaoh." "Beware lest thou forget what the Lord thy God did unto Miriam." "Beware lest thou forget what Amalek did unto thee by the way when ye were come forth out of Egypt." "Beware lest thou forget how thou provoked the Lord thy God to anger in the wilderness." *"Beware,"* he cries, again and again and again, *"beware of Forgetful Green!"* For Forgetful Green is, as Greatheart observed, the most dangerous place in all these parts.

Now this brings to my mind a most striking and suggestive coincidence. For Israel was twice in captivity—once in Egypt and once in Babylon. And the singular thing is that when the people were about to be set free from their Babylonian bondage, another prophet echoed his predecessor's warnings about Forgetful Green. Isaiah implored the people, as they turned their faces once more towards Jerusalem, never to forget the things that lay behind them. "Look unto the rock whence ye were hewn," he cried, "and to the hole of the pit whence ye were digged." He

pointed them back to the lowly origins of their national life—the pastoral tents of Mesopotamia and the brick-kilns beside the Nile—and he entreated them to keep those modest beginnings always in mind. It is good for a merchant prince to remember that, in the early days of the business, his father hawked his goods from door to door. It is good for the millionaire to recall the days when his forefathers dwelt in huts and hovels. It is good for an empire to dwell upon the time when it was a nomadic and barbarous tribe. Men are not likely to bump their heads against the stars as long as they keep one eye steadily fastened on the past.

As a young fellow, Macaulay was invited to dine with Samuel Rogers, the poet. "What a delightful house it is!" he says, in his descriptive letter to his sister. And, in telling her of the innumerable beauties of the place, he selects for special mention a fine mahogany table on which stood an antique vase. And to that table hangs a tale. For he goes on to say that, some little time previously, Sir Francis Legatt Chantrey, R.A., the eminent sculptor, had been the guest of Rogers. Sir Francis had a good look at the mahogany table on which the vase was standing, and then asked by whom the table was made. "It was made by a common carpenter," said Rogers. "Do you remember the making of it?" asked Sir

Francis. "Certainly," replied Rogers, in some surprise, "I was in the room while it was finished with the chisel, and gave the workman directions about placing it." "Yes," said Sir Francis, *"I was the carpenter!* I remember the room well, and all the circumstances." Macaulay remarks to his sister that the story is honourable, both to the talent which raised Chantrey from obscurity to eminence, and to the magnanimity which kept him from being ashamed of what he had been. In a word, it showed that the great sculptor, whose work is still the pride of his countrymen, was fully alive to the importance and peril of Forgetful Green. It is almost as good as the story that Andrew Fuller tells of William Carey. Carey was attending a reception given at Calcutta to the Governor-General of India. His lordship was struck by the missionary's appearance. "Who is that gentleman?" he inquired. "Oh," drawled one of the attendants, "that is Dr. Carey. He is Professor of Sanscrit, Bengalee, and Mahratta, in the College of Fort William. He was once a shoemaker." "Excuse me, my lord," interposed Carey, who had overheard the conversation, *"I was only a cobbler!"*

When you come to think of it, almost all our religious observances and ordinances are cunningly devised contrivances to save us from the dangers of Forgetful Green. We close our shops

and factories on one day of the week, and gather ourselves together in the house of prayer, in order that we may remind each other of the things that we cannot afford to let slip. And even the Communion Table is a feast of memory. "This do in remembrance of Me." It is all "lest we forget."

I spent Saturday evening glancing afresh over the pages of *Down in Water Street*. What a record it is! Mr. Sam Hadley deserves to be ranked amongst the greatest philanthropists of our time. During the last years of his life he was courted and admired in the most prodigal fashion. If ever a man was tempted to forget that he had been a bondman in the land of Egypt, it was he. But to the very last he kept his eye on the rock whence he was hewn, and the hole of the pit whence he was digged. He remembered the depths of degradation from which he had himself been rescued. He kept constantly in mind that terrible night in which, like the prodigal, he came to himself. It was on April 23, 1882, in his lonely prison cell that he had sought and found the Saviour. And, from that day to the close of his useful and eventful life, he always made a pilgrimage to that cell on the twenty-third of April, and kneeled again on the very spot on which he had first found mercy.

Forgetful Green, said Greatheart, is the most

dangerous place in all these parts! That, I suppose, is why old Thomas Goodwin, before entering his pulpit, liked to "take a turn up and down among his old sins." "When," he says, in his letter to his son, "when I was threatening to become cold in my ministry, and when I felt Sabbath morning coming and my heart not filled with amazement at the grace of God, or when I was making ready to dispense the Lord's Supper, do you know what I used to do? I used to take a turn up and down among the sins of my past life, and I always came down again with a broken and a contrite heart ready to preach, as it was preached in the beginning, the forgiveness of sins." "I do not think," he says again, "I ever went up the pulpit stair that I did not stop for a moment at the foot of it and take a turn up and down among the sins of my past years. I do not think that I ever planned a sermon that I did not take a turn round my study table and look back at the sins of my youth and all my life down to this present; and many a Sabbath morning, when my soul has been cold and dry for lack of prayer during the week, a turn up and down in my past life before I went into the pulpit always broke my hard heart again, and made me close with the gospel for my own soul before I began to preach." That, I suppose, is why Paul, in his last Epistles, refers so frequently and feel-

ingly to the weight of his earlier transgressions and the wealth of his wonderful forgiveness. And that, I suppose, is why Peter, in depicting the spiritual destitution of the man whose soul has become withered and stunted and dead, concludes his sad description with this tragic climax: "He has forgotten," says Peter, "he has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins." Forgetful Green is the most dangerous place through which the pilgrims pass. Christian met Apollyon there and completely vanquished him. He was very fortunate. If Samuel, or any other of Christiana's sons, had taken the trouble to turn up a spadeful of the soil of Forgetful Green, he would most certainly have come upon the bones of pilgrims who had perished there.

II

I.O.U.

I USED to think—simple soul that I was!—that what everybody said must be true. Everybody said that it was very wicked to borrow. I therefore resolved, in the guilelessness of my soul, that, as long as I lived, I would never be guilty of such an offence. I need scarcely say that I have not kept that too heroic resolution. I have become an incorrigible borrower. I scarcely meet a man in the street but the sight of his face sets me calculating how much I owe him. I borrow whenever and wherever I get the chance. I begin as soon as I rise in the morning, and I keep it up until the last thing at night. I began it before I got into my cradle; I shall continue it after I get out of my grave. I never pay for anything I purchase; at least, I only pay a part, and get credit for the rest. When I really must pay, I pay, if it be at all possible, as Mr. Micawber paid—with an I.O.U. Everybody knows the story. Mr. Micawber was leaving London; but he owed Mr. Traddles forty-one pounds ten shillings and eleven pence half-penny.

"To leave this metropolis," said Mr. Micawber, "and my friend Mr. Thomas Traddles, without acquitting myself of the pecuniary part of this obligation would weigh upon my mind to an insupportable extent. I have, therefore, prepared for my friend, Mr. Thomas Traddles, and I now hold in my hand, a document, which accomplishes the desired object. I beg to hand to my friend, Mr. Thomas Traddles, my I.O.U. for forty-one, ten, eleven and a half, and I am happy to recover my moral dignity, and to know that I can once more walk erect before my fellow man."

With this introduction, which greatly affected him, Mr. Micawber placed his I.O.U. in the hands of Traddles, and said he wished him well in every relation of life. "I am persuaded," says David Copperfield, "not only that this was quite the same to Mr. Micawber as paying the money, but that Traddles himself hardly knew the difference until he had had time to think about it. Mr. Micawber walked so erect before his fellow man, on the strength of this virtuous action, that his chest looked half as broad again when he lighted us down the stairs." I take my stand this day, not only as Mr. Micawber's defender, but as his disciple. I am a convinced believer in the virtue of the I.O.U.

Some people may consider this a shocking state

of things; but I am not in the least ashamed of it. I know that everybody still says that it is very wicked to borrow. I used to believe it; but I now smile up my sleeve. For since I first heard the statement that it is very wrong to borrow, I have knocked about the world a bit, and, in the process, have made several discoveries. I have discovered that, when everybody says a thing, and when everybody says it as confidently as if it were one of the Ten Commandments, everybody is generally talking nonsense! I have discovered that everybody else borrows, pretty much as I do; and that those who are loudest in their denunciation of the habit are often the most addicted to it; I have discovered that, whether I borrow from other people or not, they will insist on borrowing from me; and, in sheer self-protection, I am driven to a policy of retaliation! And—to come still nearer to the point—I have discovered that I must borrow or die; and, as dying has no immediate attractions for me, I prefer to borrow. I have referred to it as a habit. A habit it certainly is. It is wonderful how it grows on you. I sometimes even catch myself, as I shall presently explain, borrowing things that I do not want, things for which I have no earthly use! And now I have told the humiliating story. If it be true, as everybody says, that open confession is good for the soul,

then my soul ought to enter upon a new lease of life as a result of my having thus made a clean breast of things!

I began borrowing early. When I was making my plans for invading this planet, I came to the conclusion that my equipment would be very incomplete unless I brought a body with me. In an earlier chapter of this book—that on "The Enchanted Coat"—I have depicted the inconvenience of being without one. But a body was the one thing that I did not happen to possess. A body is composed, I was given to understand, of certain chemical substances. It consists of so much iron, so much phosphate, so much salt, so much soda, and so on. Now here was a dilemma in which to be placed at the very start! I could not begin without a body; a body required all these substances, and I did not chance to have any of them about me! What was I to do? I could only borrow! But from whom? It is begging the issue to say that I borrowed from my parents. They no more possessed these chemicals in their own right than I did. If they had them, it was because they too had borrowed them; and to the extent to which I borrowed from them, I merely borrowed what they had already borrowed. Iron, phosphate, salt, and all these chemicals belong to the earth beneath my feet; and, strictly speaking, it was from her that

I borrowed my body. "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground." From the earth, then, I borrowed my body. It was distinctly a loan, and not a gift. I had to faithfully promise that, as soon as I have finished with it, I will return it to the earth again. "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust." The chemicals that I borrowed from the earth must all go back to the earth. Nature makes her advances only on the best security. She holds the mortgage in a very firm clutch, and will exact, to the uttermost farthing, all that she has lent.

It is so all through life. Never a day comes to me under these clear Australian skies but I am touched to tears at the memory of the goodness—the self-sacrificing goodness—that my father and mother lavished upon me in the dear old English home. But now that I have left them far behind across the seas, I find myself surrounded by happy children of my own. And I see now that, in those old untroubled days across the years, I was borrowing, merely borrowing. And all these smaller hands stretched out towards me are the hands that Nature has sent to demand the repayment of the loan. If I refuse to show them love and tenderness and sympathy, I shall feel like a man whose cheque has been dishonoured at the bank. The time has come for the repayment of the loan; I repudiate the obligation; and the faces of my

father and my mother rise up in judgment against me.

Now, in glancing over what I have written, I see that I have made a pair of statements for which I shall certainly be taken to task. Let me therefore fortify them in anticipation of the inevitable assault. I declared that, so persistent does the borrowing habit become, it frequently leads me to borrow what I really do not want. That is an absolute fact. Instead of contenting myself with the worries of to-day, do I not very often borrow the burdens of to-morrow? I found myself the other evening staggering along under a load that was heavy enough to crush half a dozen strong men. Out of sheer exhaustion I put it down and had a good look at it. I found that it was all borrowed! Part of it belonged to the following day; part of it belonged to the following week; part of it belonged to the following year; and here was I borrowing it that it might crush me now! It is a very stupid, but a very ancient, blunder.

"There's a saying, old and rusty,
But as good as any new;
'Tis 'Never trouble trouble
Till trouble troubles you.'

"Don't you borrow sorrow;
You'll surely have your share;
He who dreams of sorrow
Will find that sorrow's there.

"If care you've got to carry,
Wait till 'tis at the door,
For he who runs to meet it
Takes up the load before."

This borrowing business must be done on very sane lines, or it leads to disaster. I know a man who borrows every Saturday all Sunday's energy; and on Sunday he is bankrupt. He would not dream of going to a picnic on Sunday afternoon, or of attending a picture-show on Sunday night. But he so exhausts himself on his picnics and his picture-shows on Saturday, that it takes all day Sunday to get over it. Our forefathers—the cotter of Burns's great poem and the rest—used to store up Saturday's energies so that they might be at their best on the Sunday. On the whole, I prefer their way of arranging the matter. When good old Dr. Johnson called himself to account, before entering on his fiftieth year, and set himself to live henceforth more devoutly, he wrote down, as the first step towards that high end, *"I resolve henceforth to go to sleep early on Saturday night."* There is more sound philosophy in the great man's brave resolution than appears on the surface.

But I made one other statement that may be challenged. I said that I never pay for anything I purchase, but only pay a part of the price and get credit for the rest. That is quite true, and,

as a consequence, I am in debt to all the world. What of the soldier who hazards his life in my defence? Do I dispose of my obligation to him when I pay my taxes? What of the miner who dares the perils of the mine? Do I square accounts with him when I pay my coal bill? And what of the toilers who obtain for me my food? James Nasmyth, the inventor of the steam-hammer, tells us in his autobiography of the picturesque scenes that he witnessed as a boy in the old fish-market in Edinburgh. After a stormy night, he says, during which the husbands and sons had toiled at the risk of their lives to catch the fish, intending buyers would ask the usual question of the fish-wives:

"Weel, Janet, and hoo's haddies the day?"

"Haddies, mem?" Janet would reply meaningly, "ou, *haddies is men's lives the day!*"

The shining fish would be sold, however, for a few coppers; but did those few coppers settle the score? "How little we pay our way in life!" exclaims Robert Louis Stevenson, in *An Inland Voyage*. "Although we have our purses continually in our hand, the better part of service still goes unrewarded." Said I not truly that I never pay for anything I purchase, but only pay a part and get credit for the rest? Let me make no mistake. Unless I give back to the world something that costs me blood and agony and tears, I shall,

when I quit the planet at last, be in the position of the man who leaves the neighbourhood without first discharging his just and honourable debts. I set out, be it noted, to justify *borrowing;* I have nothing to say in defence of *theft.*

I knew a man once who thought it very wicked to borrow.

"My dear fellow," I said, "you can't get through life without it!"

"Oh!" he answered, visibly shocked, "but does not the Bible exhort us *to owe no man anything*"?

"No," I replied, "the Bible says nothing of the kind. The Bible says, 'Owe no man anything *but*——,' and that exception is the greatest exception to a general principle that has ever been stated in human language. 'Owe no man anything, *but to love one another.*'" And since then he has been struggling bravely to discharge that tremendous obligation.

III

A SCRAP OF PAPER

I

WHEN I was a very small boy I made a very great discovery—in some respects the most impressive and surprising discovery that I have ever made—and what I then found out I here set down. Be it known, then, that I was the eldest son of a very large family—mostly boys. In the later days of its domestic history—after the commanding influence of my seniority had been, through my transference from a scholastic to a commercial career, somewhat relaxed—a couple of girls were admitted to the charmed circle. But that was obviously an afterthought; and I regarded it as a somewhat daring innovation on the part of my next brother, to whom I had relegated my authority. In the days that marked these feminine arrivals I no longer considered myself a boy. Like my father and my grandfather, I required a couple of numerals in which to state my age; and I therefore looked upon the family with a lofty, patronizing air; and poked fun at my brother when things went awry.

But with that later and more complicated era I am not concerned. When I was a boy, we were all boys; and it is of that iron age that I am now writing. Sunday was with us the great day of the week. No crack regiment ever made more punctilious preparation for Church Parade than we made every week. We marched out in procession like a small detachment of infantry. I and the brother next in seniority walked in front; the others followed two by two; our parents formed an effective and formidable rearguard. Marching orders came from behind; and we never knew, when we filed out of the front gate, by what route the church was to be approached. Our commander-in-chief had an astonishing genius for discovering new twists and turns by which the walk to the sanctuary might be varied. We always set out, therefore, in a perfect fever of curiosity, and every step of the way was made brimful of interest. The church itself was so situated that, come by what roads we might, it always broke grandly upon our view some time before we reached it. What a massive pile it looked with its old grey walls, its spacious portals, and the stately spire which seemed to us to pierce the very sky. As a boy I was subject to a strange infirmity—I do not know if it is common in boys. I sickened at the contemplation of a height. I vividly remember three such occa-

sions. Standing on the deck of Nelson's old flagship, the *Victory,* my father bade me look at the height of the masts. I did so, and my brain reeled, so that I almost fell. Again, my father took me to London and, standing in St. Paul's Churchyard, he told me to look at the golden cross surmounting the cathedral dome. I obeyed him; but the sickening sensation overtakes me even now as I recall that upward gaze. And once I remember looking up from the road beneath to the top of the old church spire. I never tried it again. But whenever our little procession filed solemnly into the quiet old church, I was awed by a dim, subconscious sense of the vast, the sublime, the infinite that towered above me.

II

Ours is a long pew, and I, in virtue of my dignity of primogeniture, sat at the far end, whilst the row of heads sloped downwards in an inclined plane which reached its lowest point in the baby head that generally nestled, fast asleep, upon my mother's lap long before the minister had got to thirdly. My father sat in the seat of honour next to the aisle. We had each sat next to mother in turn, and had each learned the mysteries of kneeling, standing, sitting, responding, and so on, before a later comer claimed the

favourite place and pushed us farther along the pew. I have a notion that, as boys go, I was fairly attentive and reverential. I still possess the prayer-book which I used in those days, and its well-thumbed pages show that I must have followed the liturgy pretty closely.

I felt a profound respect for the old minister. I still treasure a fine portrait of him, and whenever I gaze upon those benevolent and striking features, he seems to me to be the beau-ideal of all that a minister should be. And I had so often heard my parents speak of him in glowing terms of admiration, of affection, and of gratitude that my boyish fancy was completely captivated. As I saw that good grey head emerge from the vestry door, and as I watched the familiar form, all gowned in cassock and stole, proceed to the beautiful marble pulpit, my veneration knew no bounds. Carlyle, in his work on *Heroes,* makes the saint lead all the rest. Certainly this old minister was the first of mine. I think he must have detected my hero-worship, for, many years afterwards, when I had grown to manhood and had turned my own face wistfully towards the ministry, he—then very old and very frail—expressed a wish that some of his most cherished volumes should be transferred from his shelves to mine. And the Bible which has been my companion through all my ministry was the gift of

his widow—*"in memory of the past, and with best wishes for the future"*—on my accepting the call to my old church at Mosgiel.

But again I have rushed ahead of myself. Let me get back to my boyhood. As I sat there at the end of the pew, I was tortured by one ceaseless perplexity. I was impressed by the beautiful old church, its lofty roof, its stately pillars, its storied windows, and its ornate and solemn services. We were always taught that it was an awful thing to come in late, as though we gave our time grudgingly to worship. I remember no single occasion on which such a disaster befell us. Care was always taken that we should be in our places some minutes before the minister issued from the vestry door; and no one dreamed of stirring at the end of the service until the preacher had again retired to that seclusion.

But the thing that puzzled me was this: I could see no utility in it all. I used to wonder what end was served by it. It all seemed so hopelessly remote from real life and from the pleasures and pursuits of the week. I failed to detect any practical purpose in this aspect of things. I thought my father the very personification of everything that was upright, everything that was chivalrous, everything that was noble, unselfish, and true; but it never occurred to me that there was any connexion between his inflexible in-

tegrity on the one hand and his attachment to the sanctuary on the other. I thought my mother the sweetest and most queenly woman of whom I had ever heard or read; but I never once imagined that her affection for these sacred and awful mysteries accounted in any measure for her gentleness and charm. Until—but that is a separate story.

III

In the dear old home at Tunbridge Wells, the home that sheltered my earliest infancy, the home in which my parents still abide, there hangs a framed text. It is only a plainly printed scrap of white paper, cut from the corner of a penny sheet-almanac; and yet, if something had to go, I fancy the finest pictures in the house would be sacrificed to save it. It reads like this:

HITHERTO
HATH
THE LORD
HELPED US

It occupies a place of honour over the mantelpiece in my mother's bedroom. It has been there for more than thirty years; but I remember, as though it were but yesterday, the day when it

appeared there for the first time. We boys had a dim consciousness that things were going hardly with father and mother. He looked anxious and worried; her eyes were often red and swollen; both were unusually silent. Then one day the newly framed text made its appearance on the bedroom wall. We boys were only small, but it struck us as strange that this small scrap of white paper should have been thought worthy of such conspicuous promotion. Were there not hundreds of pretty cards lying about the home, any one of which would have made a much more tasty and beautiful adornment? But somehow we felt that things at home were brighter. It was as if the weather had cleared up; the fog had lifted; drizzling rain had yielded to summer sunshine; father and mother were happier. One morning we mustered up courage to ask some explanation. Why had the plain little text been cut from the almanac in the kitchen and been honoured with a frame in the bedroom?

But it was never in the morning, amidst the clatter and the bustle, that mother opened her heart to us. Our golden hour came on Sunday evening. On Sunday evening father went to church alone, or taking with him just one of us for company. I do not know to this day whether we were most pleased to go or stay. What walks

and talks those were in the evening cool of summer, by the starlight of autumn, or as we trudged through the winter snow! A boy tells his father under such conditions things that he would never dream of mentioning at any other time. What questions; what confidences; what revelations! There, surely, stands the true confessional! And it was grand to see the old church at night. It seemed strange to see the great stained-glass windows showing their glories to the passer-by instead of to the worshippers within. And yet, pleasant as all this was, it was costly. For it meant forsaking the circle round the fire. There mother gathered her boys about her; read with us the collect and the lesson that were being used in church; and then held us spellbound with a chapter or two of some delightful book. It is wonderful how many books we got through on those Sunday evenings. And before we said good-night we just sat and talked. Most of us were sprawling on the hearthrug, sitting on hassocks, or kneeling beside the fender. And it was then that mother told us all the secrets.

"You said the other morning, mother, that you would tell us why you framed the paper text in the bedroom."

"Well, I will. You know that father and I had a great trouble, and we feared a much heavier one. On Tuesday of last week I was

feeling dreadfully worried. I do not know why I felt it so terribly just then, but I did. I had to drop my work, pick up the baby, and walk up and down the kitchen feeling that I could endure it all no longer. My burden seemed more than I could bear. It was crushing me beneath its weight. In pacing up and down I paused for a second in front of the sheet-almanac on the wall. The only thing I saw was the text in the corner. I felt as if it had been put there specially for me. It was as if some one had spoken the words: "*Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.*" I was so overcome that I sat down and had a good cry; and then I began again with fresh heart and trust. When father came home I told him all about it, and he cut out the text with his pen-knife, had it framed, and hung it where you now see it."

IV

It was here that I made my discovery. Here was the long-lost secret! Here was the connexion between *religion* on the one hand and *real life* on the other. I saw for the first time that there was a strong and subtle link between the services of the old grey church and the daily struggle in which my father and mother were so valiantly engaged. The discovery of that day took to itself all the elements of a great

sensation. My eyes were opened and the whole world seemed changed. And among the big things of my little life the revelation of that memorable day stands out in bold and heroic relief.

IV

THE LATTICE WINDOW

Bill Sikes and his burglarious companions reached, at dead of night, the house into which they intended to break. They had taken poor, timid, shivering little Oliver Twist with them, and Sikes drew the attention of the child to a tiny lattice window, about five feet and a half above the ground at the back of the house. It belonged to a scullery, or small brewing-place, at the end of a passage. The aperture was so small that the inmates had probably not thought it worth while to defend it more securely, but it was large enough to admit a boy of Oliver's size, nevertheless. A very brief exercise of Mr. Sikes' art sufficed to overcome the fastening of the lattice; and it soon stood wide open.

"Now, listen, you young limb!" whispered Sikes, drawing a dark lantern from his pocket, and throwing the glare full on Oliver's face, "I'm a-going to put you through there! Take this light; go softly up the steps straight afore you, and along the hall to the street door; unfasten it, and let us in!"

Only a lattice window; a very tiny window; a window so extremely small that the inmates

thought it scarcely worth securing. But it was large enough to admit the frail little form of Oliver Twist, and Oliver Twist was big enough to slip through the silent corridors and open the door for the burglars. I am convinced that half the tragedy of life is bound up with that little lattice window.

One gets a little tired at times of the endless disquisitions on the causes that lead to painful moral collapses, and of the learned discussions on the decline of public morality. For the discussion always concerns itself with *the front door*. "Let us put heavier chains on the front door! Let us fix stouter bolts to the front door! Let us at any cost secure the fastenings of the front door!" But of what use are your bolts and bars, your clanking chains and safety locks, if the front door is approached *from the inside!* It is time that we gave up concentrating all our energies on the fortification of the front door, and began to pay some attention to the little lattice window. In our lamentations over some sudden individual collapse, or over some evidences of a decay in public morality, we very, very rarely put our fingers on the real root of the trouble. We are afraid to look far enough back. We forget that the disease may be very much deeper and very much older than its symptoms. And among the symptoms on the

surface, neither the root or the remedy of the evil are to be discovered. We shall never make much progress in dealing with the mischief until we awaken to the fact that there is such a thing as a lattice window. The front door is not the only aperture by which burglars invade our privacy.

To make my meaning perfectly clear, I must call another witness. Let it be John Milton. In the fourth book of his immortal poem, John Milton describes Eve as Satan saw her when he first resolved to compass her ruin. In her beauteous bower she slept, the tangling network of laurel and myrtle, roses and jessamine, arching above her head; the violets, hyacinths, and crocuses carpeting the ground about her and loading the delicious air with a medley of sweet perfumes. It was whilst thus she slumbered beneath the sentinel stars that the Tempter came the first time:

> "Him there they found
> Squat like a toad, close at the ear of Eve,
> Assaying by his devilish art to reach
> The organs of her fancy, and with them forge
> Illusions as he list, phantasms, and dreams;
> Or if, inspiring venom, he might taint
> The animal spirits that from pure blood arise."

This is very significant. A mother in my congregation assured me the other day that she had been greatly assisted in the training of her chil-

dren by forming the habit of talking to them in their sleep. "I go round," she told me, "from cot to cot; I bend over them and suggest to them the holiest, sweetest, and most beautiful thoughts that I can collect. If they are sleeping soundly, I speak softly; if they are sleeping lightly, I whisper faintly. I tell them that I know they will grow up to be pure and good and unselfish, to follow the Christ, serve their fellows, and love God above all. And when I gather them around my knee, I fancy that, when I approach such themes, their minds seem prepared to welcome the thought. It is as though a something already implanted in their hearts springs up to welcome the idea that I then openly suggest to them." I do not know how far this is psychologically sound, or how far it is a mere freak of a fond fancy; but I have a notion that there is something in it. It was thus that Milton describes the earliest approach of evil to our first mother. And the singular thing about this first form of temptation was that when Eve awoke with the sunrise, she was conscious only of a general haziness and uncertainty as to all things eternal and divine. It was but a dream, yet that dream was sufficient to shake her primitive faith in the justice, wisdom, and goodness of her great Creator. Her early confidence was clouded. She was less certain of the necessity for His singular prohibi-

tion, and more inclined to pit her own discretion against His clear and explicit commandment.

Now, it will be seen, we are back to the philosophy of the lattice window. No tragic collapse in the soul of Eve followed immediately upon the whispered insinuations of the toad, but the work of the serpent later on was made easier by this preliminary overture of evil. When the subsequent temptations came, they appeared the less loathsome, and the arguments by which they were commended seemed the more feasible, because of these illusions, phantasms, and dreams that the toad had already so slyly insinuated into the slumberer's brain. The toad prepared the way for the serpent, just as Oliver Twist, entering through the lattice window, prepared the way for Bill Sikes.

Milton makes it perfectly plain that the work of the toad was to disturb the primitive serenity of Eve's faith. She awoke full of doubt, full of uncertainty, full of terrible suspicion. No great harm was done; and yet the faith in the divine authority and goodness, the faith that would have made it so easy to have afterwards resisted the wiles of the serpent, was in ruins. Her simple trust and childlike confidence were shattered. That is life's great initial tragedy, and it is the tragedy that the statesmen and philosophers who indulge in learned disquisitions on

the decline of public morality are too apt to ignore. They forget one thing. They see the horrid trail of the serpent, but they fail to recognize the influence of the toad who went before. They forget that a shattered faith is the preparation for a ruined life. Our greatest loss is not the loss of morals; that is but a symptom. It is the loss of faith; that is the disease. The toad saps and undermines the faith, because he knows that a man without a faith falls an easy prey to the serpent, who will bring more concrete temptations to bear on riper years.

In a pretty little poem, Francis Browne pictures a band of pilgrims sitting by the sea recounting their past adventures. They tell the tale of their losses. One speaks of a tiny grass-grown grave; one of a fortune made and lost; one of a ship that never came to port; and one of a beautiful but buried bride.

"But when their tales were done,
There spake among them one,
A stranger, seeming from all sorrow free:
'Sad losses have ye met,
But mine is heavier yet,
For a believing heart hath gone from me.'

"'Alas!' these pilgrims said,
'For the living and the dead,
For fortune's cruelty, and love's sore cross,
For the wrecks of land and sea;
But howe'er it came to thee,
Thine, stranger, is life's last and heaviest loss!'"

That is precisely the philosophy of Charles Dickens and his little lattice window; it is precisely the philosophy of John Milton and his Paradise Lost. First came Oliver Twist, and then came Bill Sikes. First came the toad, and then came the serpent. First came the doubt; then came the devil. Until Satan had appeared as a toad, unsettling faith and obscuring the issue, he dared not appear as a serpent enticing to definite and open rebellion.

Obviously, therefore, the thing to be done is to fortify the little lattice window. Multiply your bolts and bars on the heavy front door if you will; but such precautions are of little avail as long as you leave the lattice window so insecure that it yields to a tap or a push. And as to Milton's parable, there can be no doubt as to the reading of his riddle. Milton is nothing if not practical. His moral here is practical enough in all conscience. In the nature of the case he could not place his toad at the ear of a child. Paradise had no children. The world's first baby-face peeped out upon a world that its parents had ruined. That in itself constitutes one of childhood's strongest claims upon maturity. But the swiftness with which Milton introduces the toad to the ear of Eve seems to indicate that doubt loses no opportunity through delay. Parents may shudder at the thought, but let them

be certain, as they brush back the flaxen curls and kiss the foreheads of their sleeping treasures, that the toad is already squatting at those ears. If, amid the sanctities of home, from lips that to little children have a divine and awful authority, those infant minds do not drink in a sublime, vigorous, and intelligent faith in the things that are too beautiful to be seen as yet, then they will go out into life pitilessly disarmed and disqualified for the struggle that lies before them. The work of the toad has been made very easy. And in a few years' time the serpent will make desperate shipwreck of their conduct and their characters. But if the lattice window be stoutly secured, Bill Sikes will be at his wits' ends.

Milton tells us that whilst the toad still spat his horrid doubts into the ear of Eve, Ithuriel came. His spear had the singular property of compelling every disguised form that it touched instantly to return to its own true character.

> "Him thus intent Ithuriel with his spear
> Touched lightly, for no falsehood can endure
> Touch of celestial temper, but returns
> Of force to its own likeness: up he starts.
> So started up in his own shape the Fiend."

I have attempted in this modest way to render a similar service to those who possess at once the glowing opportunity and the fearful responsi-

bility of the charge of young children. The toad is busy; so must they be. It is not enough to do all that lies in our power to hold our young men and women to the paths of chastity and virtue. That is good as far as it goes; just as it is good to secure carefully the great hall door; but the real peril lies one step farther back. We must on no account forget the little lattice window.

V

LUXURIATING AMONG COWSLIPS

Shall I, I wonder, be haled before my grave and reverend seniors, and tried for heresy, if I admit the right of any two private members of the congregation to criticize the minister? At any rate, that is exactly what was taking place on the occasion of which I now write, and I, for one, am not at all sorry that it happened. Catherine Furze, according to Mark Rutherford, was walking rapidly along the homeward road alone. Suddenly, she heard behind her the sound of wheels, and an open carriage overtook her. It was Dr. Turnbull's. He stopped and insisted on her riding. A very interesting conversation followed, in the course of which Catherine and the doctor discussed the world in general and the minister in particular. Catherine was inclined to idolize Mr. Cardew; but the doctor was a plain, blunt man, with no illusions.

"A remarkable man in many ways," he admitted, "but *he is luxuriating among cowslips.*"

It was the doctor's way of saying that the minister was out of touch with reality. "He is not

a man I much admire," the doctor said. "He thinks a good deal, and when I am in his company I am unaccountably stimulated; but his thinking is not directed upon life. But his wife now! There is a woman for you—a really wonderful woman, unobtrusive, devoted to her husband, annihilating herself for him. While he is *luxuriating amongst the cowslips,* in what he calls thinking, she is teaching the sick people patience, and nursing them. She is a saint, and he does not know her worth." I am delighted to find that the doctor has so exalted an opinion of the minister's wife. His well-merited tribute to *her* makes it impossible for me to resent his severe strictures on *myself.*

Now we are on delicate ground. We must therefore go carefully, and deal with the doctor's criticism bit by bit. And, to begin with, the doctor's real grievance seems to be that, whilst Mr. Cardew lives in a dream-world of his own, luxuriating among his cowslips, he completely fails to appreciate the beauty of the things right under his nose. Roving fancy-free, he peoples his world with shining angel-faces; yet, right opposite him at every meal, there is a pale and wistful face which, kissed by him, would be instantly transfigured. But, however satisfying the meal may be, those patient eyes always go away hungry. "She is a saint, but he does not

know her worth. He is *luxuriating among cowslips.*" It is very sad, and it is all the more sad because it is so common. We have a very ugly habit of glorifying the unfamiliar at the expense of the things close at hand. Many a man pays to see a painted heroine on a gaudy stage do things very much less heroic than she is doing whom he has left darning and sewing at home.

I wish it were possible to introduce a character from one story to a character from another. I should certainly introduce Mr. Cardew to Tim Linkinwater. Tim is in some respects the most lovable character in *Nicholas Nickleby.* After he had spent forty-four years in their service, Messrs. Cheeryble Brothers thought that Tim should be to some extent relieved of his duties, so they proposed an arrangement by which he would be able to live in the country, and come up to town for a few hours every day. But Tim would not hear of it. "It's forty-four year," he exclaimed, making a calculation in the air with his pen, and drawing an imaginary line before he cast it up, "forty-four year next May since I first kept the books of Cheeryble Brothers. I've opened the safe every morning all that time (Sundays excepted) as the clock struck nine, and gone over the house every night at half-past ten (except on Foreign Post nights, and then twenty minutes before twelve) to see the doors

fastened and the fires out. I've never slept out of the back attic one single night. There's the same mignonette box in the middle of the window, and the same four flower-pots, two on each side, that I brought with me when I first came. There ain't—I've said it again and again, and I'll maintain it—there ain't such a square as this in the world. I know there ain't," said Tim with sudden energy, and looking sternly about him. "Not one. For business or pleasure, in summer time or winter—I don't care which—there's nothing like it. There's not such a spring in England as the pump under the archway. There's not such a view in England as the view out of my window. I've seen it every morning before I shaved, and I ought to know something about it. I have slept in that room," added Tim, sinking his voice a little, "for four-and-forty year; and if it wasn't inconvenient and didn't interfere with business, I should request leave to die there." Poor Tim! Or, rather let me say, poor Mr. Cardew! Mr. Cardew is luxuriating among cowslips. He is living in a world of unreality, and is getting very little fun out of it. Tim scouts the very suggestion of cowslips; he is so perfectly happy without them. It is a great thing to be in love with life as it is.

In justice to Mr. Cardew, however, I am bound to say that he is not the only man on the face of

the earth who indulges the habit of luxuriating among cowslips. A minister is always a fair target for criticism; but, really, ministers are not the only people who say good-bye to reality and get their heads entangled in the clouds. I recognize that it is the poorest possible defence to plead that others have been guilty of the same crime. Yet it is just as well to see that poor Mr. Cardew does not stand alone. As examples of a crowd of other offenders let me instance the scientist and the schoolmaster. For centuries, Science merely luxuriated among cowslips. It thought and thought and thought, just as Mr. Cardew did, but its thinking—to quote Dr. Turnbull's impeachment of his minister—was not directed upon life. It was Lord Bacon who did for Science what Dr. Turnbull did for Mr. Cardew. Precisely three centuries ago that brilliant essayist and statesman hurled the thunderbolts of his vigorous denunciation into the academies of scientific learning and into the halls of philosophic thought, and charged the learned speculators with making no real contribution to the practical welfare of the race. "Words, and more words, and nothing but words, had been all the fruit of all the toil of all the most renowned sages of sixty generations." Curiously enough, the old philosophy had been singularly shy of meddling in matters that might serve some utili-

tarian end, lest it should be supposed that academic pursuits were simply followed for the sake of the vulgar purposes that they promoted. "In my time," exclaims Seneca, "men have invented transparent windows; tubes for diffusing warmth equally through all parts of a building; and shorthand, which has been carried to such a perfection that a writer can keep pace with the most rapid speaker. But the inventing of such things is drudgery for the lowest slaves; philosophy lies deeper. It is not her office to teach men how to use their hands; the object of her lesson is to form the soul." For many hundreds of years the most capable thinkers were content to deal in nebulous theories, abstract speculations, mystifying hypotheses, and occult disquisitions. They were obviously luxuriating among cowslips. Science was in the world like a spider in the water, with its own native atmosphere gathered closely about it, and fearful lest any general admixture should take place between the element that was the breath of its own nostrils and the turbid body of affairs beyond it. Even after the great revival of thought and learning that marked the fifteenth century, this pernicious superstition still survived. Between that revival and our own time, Bacon stands almost midway; and to contrast the three centuries before him with the three centuries that have followed is

to contrast darkness with light. In season and out of season he preached his doctrine that nothing can be too insignificant for the attention of the wisest which is not too insignificant to give pleasure or pain to the meanest. Until then Science, like Mr. Cardew, had been luxuriating among cowslips. Its thinking had no bearing upon reality. But Lord Bacon startled the schools and brought them to their senses.

And Macaulay bears witness to the fact that the doctrine that Bacon then preached so forcibly has, in the result, wrought untold good. It has lengthened human life, he says; it has mitigated pain; has extinguished diseases; has increased the fertility of the soil; has given new securities to the mariner; has furnished new arms to the warrior; has spanned great rivers; has guided the thunderbolt innocuously from heaven to earth; has lighted up the night with the splendour of the day; has extended the range of human vision; has multiplied the power of the human muscles; has accelerated motion; has annihilated distance; has facilitated intercourse; has enabled man to descend into the depths of the sea, to soar into the air, to penetrate securely into the noxious recesses of the earth, to traverse the land in cars which whirl along without horses, and the ocean in ships which defy both wind and wave.

I do not mean to imply that the scientist hastily abandoned his fondness for cowslips. On the contrary, he forsook them slowly and reluctantly. Everybody laughed immoderately at Shelley, when, only a hundred years ago, the romantic young poet discoursed to his fellow students at Oxford on the vast possibilities of Science for making men happy. A day would come, the youthful freshman gravely predicted, when chemistry would teach agriculturists how to turn deserts into cornfields, when even the air and the water would yield fire and food, and when Africa would be explored by aviators, the shadows of whose aerial craft, passing over the jungles, would emancipate the slaves. Jefferson Hogg tells us that, when the young dreamer enunciated these fantastic ideas, the undergraduates regarded them as the most frenzied of all the flights of their brilliant young companion's vivid fancy; yet who, knowing what we know, can fail to see in his declaration something distinctly prophetic? He was simply stating that Science would not always be satisfied with cowslips.

The impeachment of the schoolmaster may be stated more briefly for the simple reason that the witnesses are tumbling over each other in their eagerness to give evidence against him. Dr. Turnbull was Mr. Cardew's only critic; but the

schoolmaster has critics galore. Mr. H. G. Wells, both in *Kipps* and in *The New Machiavelli,* has tellingly portrayed the chasm that yawns between the atmosphere of the schools on the one hand and the stern realities of life on the other. Mr. Wells, it is true, carries the assault into moral as well as into intellectual realms, but his criticism is robbed of none of its force on that account. He describes the schools and universities pouring their stream of medalled and certificated scholars into the glare and tumult of London life, whilst those bewildered young prize-winners find themselves as unprepared for the workaday requirements and flaunting temptations of the city as if they had suddenly arrived from Mars or from the moon. Mr. A. C. Benson, in *Water Springs,* makes his hero, Mr. Howard Kennedy, Fellow and Classical Lecturer at Beaufort College, Cambridge, pause in the midst of his quiet academic routine and startle himself with the question as to whether or not his sequestered world is in touch with reality at any point. And Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch has, in his own way, been directing attention to the same pressing problem. Clearly, therefore, the propensity to luxuriate among the cowslips, however characteristic of Mr. Cardew, is by no means a monopoly of his.

One of these days Mr. Cardew, and his com-

panions among the cowslips, will suddenly discover that there are other flowers in the world beside cowslips. There are dandelions, for example. As a matter of fact, Catherine was coming from among the dandelions when she met Dr. Turnbull. Nobody can have read Mark Rutherford's great story without remembering for ever afterwards the wretched hovel in which Phoebe Crowhurst was dying, and the little burying-ground, choked with dandelions, sorrel, and docks, not far off. Catherine had been to visit poor Phoebe.

"'I will read the Bible to you before I go, Phoebe; what would you like?'

"Phoebe chose neither prophecy, psalm, nor epistle, but the last three chapters of St. Matthew. When we come near death, or near something which may be worse, all exhortation, theory, promise, advice, and dogma fail." Cowslips, that is to say, are at a discount. "The one staff which will not break under us is the victory achieved in a like situation by One who has preceded us; and the most desperate private experience cannot go beyond the garden of Gethsemane. Catherine read through the story of the conflict, and when she came to the resurrection she felt, and Phoebe felt, as millions have felt before, that this was the truth of death."

Depend upon it, the dandelions are in the world to save us from the cowslips. If only Mr. Cardew could have forsaken the cowslips and got among the dandelions, it would have been his salvation. If a man is inclined to luxuriate among cowslips, let him go straight off to the haunts of human misery; let him grapple at first-hand with all the problems of sin and dirt and disease and death; let him grasp the hand of the tempted, hear the tale of the desolate, and watch the last struggle of the dying, and the cowslips will instantly lose their glamour. In one of his books, George Borrow describes a specially enchanting Spanish landscape. "I sat down on the broken wall," he says, "and remained gazing and listening, and shedding tears of rapture; for of all the pleasures which a bountiful God permitteth His children to enjoy, none are so dear to some hearts as the music of forests and streams, and the view of the beauties of His glorious creation. An hour elapsed, and I still maintained my seat. . . . The sun burned my visage and I heeded it not, and I believe that I should have remained till night, buried in these reveries, which I confess only serve to enervate the mind and steal many a minute which might be more properly employed, had not the *report of a gun of a fowler* in the valley caused me to start to my feet." What a pity that that par-

ticular fowler is not always handy when the cowslips become too seductive for us!

But Mr. Cardew was saved from the cowslips after all. He looked one day into the eyes of a dying woman, and it acted upon him as the report of the fowler's gun acted upon George Borrow. He saw for himself what Dr. Turnbull had seen years before. His ministry had been a matter of luxuriating among cowslips. "Mr. Cardew resigned his living," Mark Rutherford tells us, "and did not preach for many years. Later in life he took up his work again in a far-distant, purely agricultural parish, but his sermons were of the simplest kind—exhortations to pity, consideration, gentleness, and counsels as to the common duties of life. He spent much of his time in visiting his parishioners, and in helping them in their difficulties. Before Mr. Cardew was set for evermore the face which he saw white and saintly that May morning when death had entered." Mr. Cardew had been delivered from the tyranny of the cowslips. Blessed be the sharp startling report of the fowler's gun!

VI

A CHIP OF HISTORY

I DO not propose to tell again the whole sad story of the Burke and Wills expedition. That tale—the most tragic and touching in the entire history of world-wide exploration—is too familiar to need retelling now. But there is one phase of the great and thrilling episode which I have received at first-hand, and which, as far as I know, has never before been recorded. I content myself with being the chronicler of that solitary incident. I base upon it no doctrine or argument. I state the facts precisely as they have been told to me.

I

I was talking the other day with an old lady who witnessed both the jubilant departure and the melancholy return of the great expedition. It set out from Melbourne, as everybody knows, in August, 1860. What crowds lined the streets to cheer the men who were to be the first to cross the continent of Australia! The preparations had been made regardless of expense. A train of camels had been imported from India, and, in

contrast with the modest equipment of the earlier overlanders, the baggage of the party ran into a score of tons. My lady friend was a member of the Chief Secretary's party. The Hon. William Nicholson had invited her to accompany him to the camp to see the sendoff. "How bright and gay it all seemed!" she says. "I remember as clearly as though it were yesterday those last scenes in camp. There was the luncheon, with its loud hum of excited conversation and its repeated outbursts of laughter. There were the speeches, all so full of hope and confidence. I recall the handshakes as the camp broke up. Everybody crowded round the men as they prepared to mount. Their hands must have ached with the much shaking. 'Good luck to you!' everybody cried as they mounted. All eyes were on the camels as, with swaying heads and long ungainly stride, they trooped out in a long straggling procession. The air was rent with cheers as Burke himself rode past, his face flushed with elation and hope. We watched them all until they passed into the shadows in the distance, and then we turned back towards our homes in the city." Never, surely, did men go to their deaths in the desert more gaily than did these.

II

Burke was accompanied by Wills, Brahe,

Gray, and King; and it is with King that my part of the story is concerned. These five men made up the first detachment of the expedition. The second part was to follow later and join the leaders at Cooper's Creek. All were then to proceed together on their march across the continent. But vexatious delays took place. The head of the expedition got tired of waiting at Cooper's Creek for the tail to crawl up. At last Burke decided to proceed without the balance of his party. Leaving Brahe at Cooper's Creek to welcome and bring on the belated rearguard, he set out with Wills, Gray, and King across the desert. The rest is common knowledge. How the four men crossed the continent; how they endured unutterable tortures of hunger, thirst, and weariness on the way back; how Burke almost died through eating a venomous and loathsome snake; how Gray actually perished; how the three survivors paused for twenty-four hours beside the grave of their comrade; how the loss of those precious hours eventually involved both Burke and Wills in a similar disaster; how the three men—emaciated, starving, and almost demented—staggered into Cooper's Creek a few hours after the other detachment had deserted it; and how both Burke and Wills died out in the scrub,—these are an integral part of our Australian records.

III

In Melbourne a rumour was fast gaining ground that all was not well with the expedition from which so much had been expected. The stories especially alarmed King's sister. King was the youngest member of the expedition, and his sister was deeply attached to him. She was a member of the Methodist Church in Fitzroy Street, which faces the St. Kilda Park gates. As the ugly stories became more persistent and circumstantial, she determined, in her distress, to take counsel with her minister. He, in his turn, laid the matter before the congregation, and suggested that, as King was a member of their church, they should hold special meetings for prayer, and enter into a united concert of intercession until the fate of the party should be known. The people took the matter up with avidity, and applied themselves to it with commendable constancy. "During all those long and trying months that followed," my lady friend tells me, "the prayers of that congregation ascended like incense in private and in public to the Throne of the Heavenly Grace. King's sister was always there. How they prayed! And the more persistent the tales of disaster became, the more earnestly these people gathered together for prayer. The most circumstantial stories of

the utter extinction of the exploratory party never daunted them. Until the worst was confirmed, they clung desperately to their faith. Night and day they called upon God to spare the youth who had gone to hazard his life in the wilderness. The one encouraged the other; and long after any individual of that group would, by himself, have abandoned the case as hopeless, the gregarious instinct kept faith from flagging, and all together persevered where any one, if left to himself, would have allowed the sacred flame to languish.

IV

Now what was happening out in the desert whilst those Methodists prayed in the city? We have seen the three men stagger back to the camp at Cooper's Creek, only to find that their comrades had a few hours previously forsaken it. Has anybody ever gazed with eyes quite dry on the great canvas in the Melbourne Art Gallery that so vividly and tellingly portrays that terrible and historic scene? All the way across the sandy uplands the three have struggled on, nervously measuring their failing strength, and anxiously calculating the chances of its holding out until they could once more reach their base. And now, after an hour of indescribable excitement, they have reached it—and reached it just

a few hours too late! The letter left in the forsaken camp bore the date of the day on which they read it! Oh, for the four-and-twenty hours that they squandered at the graveside of Gray! But it was no time for vain regrets. What was to be done? They set out for home, but with little hope of ever reaching it. Famished and exhausted, they fell in with some blacks who fed them on roots and native foods. But they soon discovered that such fare, although it satisfied, did not nourish them; and they were starving in the midst of plenty. Burke resolved to make one desperate effort to get back to Cooper's Creek. Taking King with him, he started. But, alas, the task was too great. Burke sank exhausted on the sands. He is the only man of whom I know who ever wrote an account of his own death. So anxious was he that his journal should be complete that he wrote it right down to that last sad scene in the desert. He asked King to remain with him to the end, to place in his dead hand the pistol with which friends in Melbourne had presented him, and then to leave him, not buried, but lying with his face to the stars. And so implicit was his confidence in King's loyalty and obedience that he described in his journal that last sad scene. As though surveying his death in retrospect, he says of that final act of reverent homage:

"King has behaved nobly. He has stayed with me to the last, and placed the pistol in my hand, leaving me lying on the surface as I wished."

I really believe that to be the most touching personal record ever written. Having stretched out his dead leader on the sands, King hurried back to Wills. But he, too, had paid the last penalty of the pathfinder. King sorrowfully buried him, and then sat down to map out his own course. Of the original party—the party that had crossed the continent—he alone survived. He had buried Gray; he had left Burke lying in solemn state beneath the stars; and now he had buried Wills. And all the time, at Fitzroy Street, prayer rose like a fountain from the depths of a sister's soul and from a company of kindred spirits bound together by a covenant of intercession.

V

The ugly stories that had startled Melbourne without daunting the praying band had at last to be reckoned with. If they were not true, what had become of the explorers? A relief expedition was organized. After a long search they one day came upon a strange and ragged creature, neither black nor white, with tangled and dishevelled hair, with gaunt form and haggard eye,

a creature to whom speech seemed at first impossible. He was wasted to a shadow, and only the remnants of his clothes indicated his former civilized condition. They soon made out that this was King; and in due time they gleaned from him, bit by bit, the terrible story of his experiences and adventures. Later on, they reverently gathered up the bones of his companions that they might be brought to Melbourne for honourable burial. And then—we are in Melbourne again, and my lady friend, who witnessed the scene, shall herself tell the story.

"It was a bright clear day," she says, "and the people turned out in thousands. For hours they thronged in sad and sombre silence every point of vantage. Then, hark! the deep diapason of the Dead March in *Saul* comes sullenly up on the wind. To the heavy tramping of the processional pageant—voices all hushed and heads reverently bowed—the catafalque passes. There are smothered sobs, and strong men brush away a tear. That casket contains all that is left of those gallant men who rode so proudly forth, accompanied by a cavalcade of camels, and encouraged by the plaudits of the people. I heard the cheering and the music as they went; I stood amidst the sorrowing crowds when the mournful cortège re-entered the city. It was a strange contrast."

VI

But did that casket contain all that was left of them? Not quite. For down at Fitzroy Street King stood beside his sister, surrounded by a group of grateful friends. He heard the story of their steadfast and unflagging ministry of intercession. And as he sat among them whilst they returned solemn and heartfelt thanks for his preservation, both he and his sister found their hearts too full for utterance.

VII

MAXIMS OF THE MUD

HURRAH for winter! Winter brings the long evenings and the blazing fires. Winter teaches us the love of home and the worth of books. It is good to sit with a great story by a roaring fire, surrounded by familiar faces, and to hear the bleak wind whistle round the house, and the pelting rain rattle on the window. Winter brings a host of really good things, and among the treasures in its train I sing to-day the praise of mud. I always feel thankful to Tennyson for giving us a phrase to set over against Ruskin. Ruskin wrote on the "Ethics of the Dust," so Tennyson told us of the "Maxims of the Mud." The sentence occurs, of course, in the *Idylls of the King*. Says Vivien:

> " . . . gracious lessons thine,
> And maxims of the mud!"

"Maxims of the Mud!" That is good! But what are they? Now, as a matter of fact, mud may teach us one of the most salutary lessons that our cynical generation needs. It is a common-

place with us that "all is not gold that glitters." It is one of our favourite platitudes that "things are not what they seem." And these pitiable platitudes and cant commonplaces ring in our ears from morning to night, preaching their hideous philosophy of suspicion. And as a result we find ourselves analysing and criticising everything and everybody, fearful lest every angel that greets us should prove only a fiend in disguise. But the mud gives us a happier, perhaps a holier, conception of life's attitude. For what is mud? The dictionary says that it is "mire, slime, sediment, soft earth as in a puddle," &c. That is all the dictionary knows! But let us go back to Ruskin. He knew something of the maxims of the mud as well as of the ethics of the dust. The great philosopher was one day walking along the streets of an English manufacturing town. The weather had been very wet, and the mud was most abundant and tenacious. The thought occurred to him that he would have the mud analysed to find out its organic elements. This was accordingly done, and the black and grimy mud was found to consist of sand, clay, soot, and water. Musing upon them, the thought occurred to him that these are the very substances from which our precious gems are formed. From the *sand* or silica are formed the onyx, chrysolite, agate, beryl, cornelian,

chalcedony, jasper, sardius, amethyst; from the *clay* are formed the sapphire, ruby, emerald, and topaz; from the *soot* is formed the diamond; and the *water* is the same as that which, in the form of a dew-drop, sparkles in the heart of a rose. So that, in wading through the ugly mud, he had really been splashing among sapphires. Here, therefore, is the true meaning of mud. It tells us that the toothless epigrams of our common chatter are true in letter but false in spirit. It tells us that "all is not gold that glitters," simply because that which glitters may be much more precious than gold. It tells us that "things are not what they seem" because they may be a thousandfold better than they seem. It tells us that, instead of being so swift to suspect the angel of being a devil disguised, we should rather suspect the ragged stranger of being in truth an angelic visitant. Sir Launfal found the Christ in the guise of a leper. The mud of life may be jingling with jewels.

And, after all, even when the worst comes to the worst, the mud is rarely inevitable. There is usually a way round or a path across. Those who have threaded the narrow tracks that intersect the boiling mud in the volcanic region of New Zealand will appreciate the point. It may be with us as with those poor Londoners of whom Mark Rutherford so sadly writes: "The sky over

their heads is mud; the earth is mud under their feet; the muddy houses stretch in long rows—black, gaunt, and uniform. The very Park is wrapped in impenetrable mud-grey." But what of that? It is nevertheless easily possible for a man to walk through London, from Whitechapel to Kensington, without soiling his patent shoes. "You needn't think there are no more mud-holes, matey, for there are!" writes the brave little "Lady of the Decoration." "When I see them ahead I climb the fence and walk around!" Exactly! That is a maxim of the mud well worth having learned. I am very fond of that great story that James Nasmyth tells in his Autobiography. When he was quite a boy he found his way to London. His father—a rare and sagacious Scotsman—accompanied him to help him in the choice of lodgings. They found a very suitable room just behind the Surrey Theatre. To the younger Nasmyth's surprise, however, his father abruptly declined it. When they got outside, James asked his father for his reasons. "Well," the older man replied, "did you not see that extremely gay bonnet lying on the bed? Well, James, I think that, in the vicinity of a theatre, that looks suspicious." And then he sagely added, "At all events, James, you will find that though there are many dirty roads in life, if you use your judgment *you may always*

be able to find a clean crossing." And so I repeat that, even when the worst comes to the worst, when the mud is everywhere, it is never quite inevitable. There is always a way round or a way through.

And surely, if we see the muddy side of life, it is usually because our eyes are down to the ground. Is it not Kingsley who tells us that

> "Two women looked through their prison bars;
> The one saw mud, the other saw stars?"

The mud was there for both of them to see; the stars of God smiled down on each; but the one looked down in despair, while the other looked up in devotion. That is invariably the case. There is a bright light in the cloud, but men do not see it because they focus their attention upon the centre of the gloom. There is mud, and there are the stars. There is the blackness of the cloud, and there is the silver lining. You may feast your eyes on which you will. "I reached Folkestone on a rainy day, after a sojourn on the Continent," writes Professor Huxley. "The streets of that little southern town were thick with mud, but," he continues, "I could have lain down and rolled in it; I was so glad that it was English mud!" So that even the mud need not always look muddy; and the fact clearly is, that the things we look upon take

to themselves their gay tints or their dark hues according to the colours of the spectacles through which we view them.

But the finest word ever written about mud was perhaps the earliest. It is a singular and intensely significant fact that, even in this scientific age of ours, we invariably find that the last word has to be said, and the greatest pronouncements delivered, on almost every conceivable subject, by those holy men of old who spake as they were borne along by the Holy Spirit. In the infancy of the race there lived a sufferer named Job, who chanced also to be a philosopher, as sufferers so often are. Day by day he scanned his little horizon in search of comfort. One day his eyes rested upon the muddy banks of a stagnant pond; and out of the mud the sword-like reeds and the tall papyrus stalks were growing. And he exclaimed, "Can the papyrus grow up *without mud?* Can the reed grow without the stagnant water?" Now the papyrus stood to the ancients for literature; just as the reed represented music. And the joy of Job consisted in this: that the literature and the music of the ages seemed to him to be growing out of that repulsive mud about the banks of the tarn. And this meant much to poor Job. For it became as clear as noonday to him that, if the fluid mud could afford life to the papyrus and the reed,

then nothing need be altogether useless in a world like this. There are many who feel themselves to be as useless as the mud of a stagnant pool, and yet they may, by the quiet and gracious influence of their obscure lives, make it possible for others to be great and noble and good. The mud ministered to the papyrus and the reed. Did not Lord Shaftesbury confess that he owed all the power of his life and service to the silent Christian influence of the girl who nursed him as a child? The reed grew out of the stagnant water, the papyrus grew out of the mire. That was Job's cheery philosophy concerning mud. Emerson may well say that

> "In the mud and scum of things
> There's always, always something sings!"

Yes, there are voices in the mud which rival the notes of the larks and the linnets, voices to which many prophets and mighty men have listened with rapture and inspiration.

Just one word, and that of strictly colonial application, ought to be said under such a heading as this. I have often discovered, especially in New Zealand, among the bluegum- and the wattle-trees near many a fine residence, the old mud-hut which served as a mansion for the first settlers. And round about the grounds, almost hidden by a more pretentious and more beautiful

boundary-line, is the old mud wall which marked those early divisions of property. That mud, too, is eloquent,

> "For it rarely stirs the blood
> To see cities in the bud,
> And to feel a nation growing
> Out of sticky prairie mud."

In lands like these we cannot afford to forget the privations and hardships endured by those pathfinders of a century ago. They heard the poet's call:

> "Far, far off the daybreak call—hark! how loud and clear I hear it wind!
> Swift! to the head of the army!—Swift, spring to your places,
> Pioneers! O Pioneers!"

And they answered it. And the men and women of to-day, who "dwell in ceiled houses," utilizing their father's mud-hut as a toolhouse or a lumbershed, will do well to cherish a profound reverence for those who carved a way for themselves through almost insuperable obstacles, and left a heritage of comfort and prosperity to the generation that cometh after. Would it seem very foolish if we were to raise our hats as we pass those old mud-huts? It is one more illustration of the eternal principle that "other men laboured, and we are entered into their labours."

No, no, no! Let us say no hard things about the winter mud. If we do, the swallows and the beavers and the mason bees will certainly rise up in judgement against us. For where would they be without the mud of which they build to themselves their lovely homes? "He hath made everything beautiful in His time," said a very wise man a long time ago; and it is only because our eyes are dim that we fail at times to see the beauty of the mud.

VIII

CONCERNING SAMUEL CREGGAN

Samuel Creggan is no frolic of my fancy—nor of any other man's. Samuel Creggan is a real character, or at least he was. Indeed, he is the original on whom one of our greatest pieces of fiction has been founded. It was he who suggested to Robert Louis Stevenson the conception of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.* "I was in Stevenson's company," Mr. Charles H. E. Brookfield tells us, in his *Random Reminiscences,* "I was in Stevenson's company at the moment that he conceived the germ of the idea. He was inveighing against a man named *Samuel Creggan* with whom he had done business, and with whose methods he was dissatisfied. "He's a man who trades on the *Samuel,*" Stevenson declared in his rather finiking, musical Scotch voice. "He receives you with *Samuel's* smile on his face; with the gesture of *Samuel* he invites you to a chair; with *Samuel's* eyes cast down in self-depreciation he tells you how well satisfied his clients have always been with his dealings; but every now and again you catch a glimpse of the

Creggan peeping out like a white ferret; *Creggan's* the real man; *Samuel's* only superficial." So much by way of introducing *Samuel Creggan*. The episode reminds me of an incident of my college days. A lecture was in progress, and a slight discussion arose. A student, whose valour outran his discretion, ventured to join issue with the professor, and had duly fortified himself with ponderous authorities.

"But, sir," he observed, "does not *John Angell James*—Dr. Dale's predecessor at Birmingham—say so-and-so?"

"If," replied the learned lecturer, without turning a hair, "if *John Angell James* ever said that, Mr. Robinson, it must have been at a moment when the *John* and the *James* had got the upper hand and the *Angell was asleep*!"

So there you are! It is the old, old problem.

"Be sure," said Margaret Howe, in discussing the complexities of Drumsheugh's character with Doctor Maclure, "be sure there's twa fouk in every ane o's. There's twa Drumsheughs—one Drumsheugh 'at fought wi' the dealers an' lived like a miser, an' anither Drumsheugh that gied the money for Tammas Mitchell's wife an' nursit ma laddie."

The doctor argued the other way, and stoutly maintained that there was but one Drumsheugh; but Ian Maclaren's readers, who are in the

secret, know that, not so long before, the doctor himself had given Drumsheugh to his face a bit of his mind.

"Drumsheugh," he exclaimed, "ye're the maist accomplished lear 'at's ever been born in Drumtochty, an'—*the best man a' ever saw!*"

And so—I repeat—there you are! But are we to leave it at that? Ought we not to grapple with the problem? In his *Reminiscences,* Sir Henry Hawkins tells of a woman whom he once defended. She was so utterly abandoned and depraved that she had undertaken to assist her husband and son in murdering a servant-girl. Whilst the two men committed the revolting crime, the woman held down the victim. And yet, when the issue of the trial was trembling in the balance, this same woman came forward with an astounding proposition. "If the trial goes on," she said, "we may all three get off, or we may all three be hanged. I wish to place my husband and my boy beyond the pale of so terrible a risk." And then she pleaded that she might be sent to the gallows, and that, with her execution, justice might be satisfied! "Here," as Sir Henry says, "was a strange mingling of evil and good—of diabolical cruelty and noble self-sacrifice—in one breast! I leave others to work out this problem of human nature." That is precisely what we have all been doing—leaving

others to work out the problem. But it will not do. We must tackle it. Which is the real man —*Samuel* or *Creggan?* Which is the real Drumsheugh—the niggardly Drumsheugh of the market-place or the noble-hearted Drumsheugh who secretly sustained the widow and the orphan? It is worth spending five minutes in wrestling with these alluring conundrums.

I respectfully submit that it is begging the question to say that there is neither a *Samuel* as such, nor a *Creggan* as such, but a *Samuel Creggan* one and indivisible. Robert Louis Stevenson's book notwithstanding, a man cannot be both Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. He must be acting a part in the one character or in the other. If, peering down into the fearsome recesses of this soul of mine, I sometimes catch glimpses, not of one man, but of what appears to be two, how can I determine *which of those two* is really and truly *myself?* That is the question.

And in casting about for some clue to this most intricate maze, I came upon that man to whom the Saviour said, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth! And straightway the man cried out and said with tears, *Lord, I believe: help Thou mine unbelief.*"

Lord, I believe—it is the voice of Samuel the Saint!

Help Thou mine unbelief—it is the voice of Creggan the Sceptic!

Now which is the real man, *Samuel* or *Creggan,* Saint or Sceptic? The question is of first-class importance, because no prayer so exactly expresses the cry of the universal heart. It is my prayer; it is your prayer: it is everybody's prayer. In the biography of Bishop Westcott there is an affecting description of Dr. Westcott's visit to the death-bed of Bishop Lee, of Manchester. "People quote various words of the Lord," said the dying prelate to his distinguished visitor, "people quote various words of the Lord as containing the sum of the gospel—the Lord's Prayer, the Sermon on the Mount, and the like; but to me the essence of the gospel is in simpler and shorter terms—*'Fear not; only believe.'*" And then, as he reflected a moment, the feeling swept over him that those words were not as simple as they seemed. He was frightened by the frailty of his faith.

"*'Only believe,'*" he repeated, "*'only believe,'* —ah, Westcott, mark that *'only.'*"

Tears filled his eyes. "*Only believe.*" But did he believe? And at last his soul found expression and consolation in the old, agonizing cry, "*Lord, I believe: help Thou mine unbelief.*"

But we are still staring at the problem instead of solving it.

Lord, I believe—it is the voice of Samuel the Saint.

Help Thou mine unbelief—it is the voice of Creggan the Sceptic. Which is the true man? Is there any clue? I think there is.

When faith and unbelief are struggling in my soul as they struggled in the soul of the man who looked through his tears into the Saviour's face, and as they struggled in the soul of the dying bishop, the question is, "Where do I myself stand?" Faith and Unbelief are at war within me; but I myself do not consist of Faith and Unbelief. My personality is greater than my faith, greater than my doubt. Where do *I* stand? Do I range myself alongside my faith, or do I range myself alongside my doubt? Am I with *Samuel* or am I with *Creggan?* The fine thing about the man in the gospel story, and about the dying bishop, is that they took their stand beside their faith, and put their doubt from them as a thing to be pitied and deplored.

Lord, I believe—it is the identification of the Man himself with his faith.

Help Thou mine unbelief—it is the repudiation by the Man himself of his doubt.

Everything hinges there. A man may identify himself with his faith and repudiate his unbelief; this is the triumph of *Samuel.* "This is the victory that overcometh the world." Or, on the

other hand, he may identify himself with his unbelief and renounce his faith; this is the triumph of *Creggan*. That is what Pliable did. Christian and he fell together into the Slough of Despond. Let Bunyan tell the story:

"Here, therefore, they wallowed for a time, being grievously bedaubed with the dirt.

"Then said Pliable, 'Ah, Neighbour Christian, where are we now?'

"'Truly,' said Christian, 'I do not know.'

"At that, Pliable began to be offended, and, giving a desperate struggle or two, got out of the mire *on that side of the slough which was next to his own house*. So away he went, and Christian saw him no more. Wherefore Christian was left to wallow in the slough alone, but still he endeavoured to struggle *to that side of the slough which was farther from his own house,* and next to the Wicket-Gate; the which he did."

Here, then, with his usual sure and skilful touch, Bunyan probes to the very root of the whole matter: Christian and Pliable alike floundered in the bog; just as we all alike find ourselves simultaneously the subjects of Faith and the victims of Unbelief. But here was the difference. Pliable, identifying himself with the basest instincts within his breast, and repudiating the faith that had called him out on pilgrimage, turned sordidly to that side of the slough

that was next to his own house; whilst Christian, identifying himself with his pilgrim spirit, and repudiating the promptings that suggested a retreat, turned wistfully towards the opposite bank.

It is a great day in the life of Samuel Creggan when he discovers that his soul is the tenant of irreconcilable incompatibilities. There is the *Samuel* element, and there is the *Creggan* element. Which shall he repudiate? With which shall he identify himself? He will never, of course, get rid of either. He will be *Samuel Creggan* to his dying day; and SAMUEL CREGGAN will be carved upon his coffin. If he takes sides with the *Creggan* against the *Samuel*, he will find, whenever he glances over his shoulder, that *Samuel* is following all the way in the fond hope that some day the man, his master, will tire of the baseness of *Creggan*, and give his reason and his conscience a chance. And if, on the other hand, the man identifies himself with *Samuel*, and dismisses *Creggan*, *Creggan* will steal along behind him, like a dog with his tail between his legs, hoping against hope to be one day called to his master's side. A man may decide for Unbelief, but Faith will always follow him, longing for a happier day. A man may decide for Faith; but Doubt will stealthily dog his footsteps to the last. *Samuel* and *Creggan* will never be very far apart.

Still, it makes all the difference as to which of the two walks proudly by his master's side, and which follows, in disgrace, behind him.

"I believe!" cries the man in the Gospel bravely.

"I believe!" cries Bishop Lee, on his death-bed, cheerily.

"I believe!" cry I; and all my soul is in that glorious credo.

"My unbelief!" cries the man in the Gospel sadly.

"My unbelief!" cries Bishop Lee, on his death-bed, tearfully.

"My unbelief!" cry I; and I hang my head in shame as I say it.

"Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief!" It is Christian in the slough; but it is Christian in the slough with his back to the City of Destruction, and with his face towards the City Celestial.

IX

PUNCH AND JUDY

When I reached home last night, a little tired, I threw myself into a cosy arm-chair that the angel of the house had prepared for me beside the fire, and picked up what I took to be an illustrated magazine. It turned out, however, to be the Academy Pictures; and, to my delight, it fell open at a really fine engraving of Punch and Judy. Here is the village green, with the famous show set up beneath the trees. Everything is simply perfect, particularly the expressions on the faces of the country folk. Nothing could have been more restful than to survey this sea of smiles; and by the time I had finished with the picture I felt as a man feels after a good sleep and a refreshing cup of tea.

Now wherein lies the secret of the perennial fascination and universal appeal of Punch and Judy? Look at this motley crowd on this village green. The artist has sampled humanity at all points, and yet every face is brightened by the antics of the puppets. I am afraid I should think the less of a man's religion if I discovered that

Punch and Judy held no place in his affections. As I glance around my study-shelves, and scan the names of my favourite authors, I like to think that they were men who could laugh at Punch and Judy. If I caught one of them scowling at Punch and Judy, I should certainly henceforth scowl at him. Dickens introduces the showman scores of times; but he always handles the subject lovingly; and there is abundant evidence that he always paused to see the fun whenever he heard the strains of the showman's flute. And if I turn from the shelves that hold my fiction to the more sombre departments of my library it is just the same. Here, for example, are the works of Professor Drummond. "No power on earth," says Ian Maclaren, "could drag Henry Drummond past a Punch and Judy show —the ancient, perennial, ever-delightful theatre of the people—in which, each time of attendance, he detected new points of interest." And here is one of the last glimpses that we catch of him. Mr. Hunter Boyd met him at the General Assembly in Edinburgh not long before he died. He went with hundreds of others to hear Dr. Parker's celebrated address in the Assembly Hall. "I noticed," said Mr. Boyd, "that while the rest of the company hurried quickly to the Assembly Hall, he inclined to linger in Princes Street and on the Mound. At the foot of the

Mound there was a Punch and Judy show. He stopped and looked at me attentively. I knew he meant to say, 'Shall we miss Parker or shall we miss Punch and Judy?' How he loved to see the show and to watch the faces of the crowd!" I did not pause to draw attention to Ian Maclaren's own tell-tale adjectives—"the ancient, perennial, ever-delightful theatre of the people" —but if they do not imply that he had himself fallen under the magic of Punch's wand, I should make a very poor private detective.

One could go on like this indefinitely, but I must be permitted to sample the bookshelves in yet another corner. A Doctor of Divinity, if you please; and a Scottish Doctor of Divinity at that. There was no nonsense about Thomas Guthrie: a doctor of the good old school was he. And here, at the close of his life-story, I find two pregnant passages. His great ministry is finished, and every utterance now is born of rich and ripe experience. And out of that wealthy experience, I find him talking lovingly of Punch and Judy! The passage occurs in one of his last letters. He dreads lest, as the end approaches, he should lose the buoyancy and sprightliness of his faith. "I hope," he writes, "I hope I may ever be child enough to enjoy Punch and Judy, or anything that brings a sunlight smile to children's faces." When, later on, the old doctor

lay a-dying, they asked him what he would like them to sing to him. "Just sing me a bairn's hymn!" he replied. And somehow I am dimly conscious of a vague association of ideas connecting that letter about Punch and Judy with that dying utterance.

Punch and Judy prove conclusively that we are all in love with life. Why are we so fond of nursery-rhymes, fairy-tales, love-stories, novels, plays, and all the rest of it? There is only one answer possible. We love them for the sake of the life that is in them. Give a child a cake; and, if he likes it, he will cry for all the cakes in the confectioner's shop. It is his way of paying a compliment to the cake that he is eating. And in the same way I have so thoroughly relished the little bit of life that was doled out to me that I find myself clamouring for all the lives that I can see. I want the life of Humpty-Dumpty and Jack the Giant Killer; I want the life of the lovely princess and the fairy godmother; I want the life of the beautiful heroine in the romance, and I want the life of the gallant hero in the novel. I am delighted when somebody offers to tell me a story, because I know that it will present still another phase of the thing I love so well. The same hunger underlies my passion for biography, and even my fondness for the Bible. The Bible is the divinest book in

any language—and the humanest. It differs from all other sacred writings in one essential particular. It is so throbbingly, pulsingly personal. It is the story of human struggle, human suffering, human experience, and human triumph. It appeals to my love of life. It is full of stories. My love of such things is like my love of the kaleidoscope. Once I have put it to my eye, it is very difficult to lay it down. You are so entranced by the lovely mosaics that you have already seen that you feel that you must turn the glass just once more and see another—and another—and another. Life has been so sweet to me that I like to mark the relish with which others tell of their enjoyment of it. Life has played so many pranks on me that I love to stand and see the grotesque fashion in which she handles Punch and Judy.

I sometimes fancy, too, that Punch and Judy offer us a striking instance of the grouping of life's affinities. Punch always gets Judy, and Judy always gets Punch. Jack always gets Jill, and Jill always gets Jack. Not by the most frantic flight of fancy can you conceive of Punch and Jill going up the hill to get a pail of water; or of Jack and Judy playing their parts in the famous show. The thing never works out that way. It is always Punch and Judy; it is always Jack and Jill. It is never Jack and Judy; never

Punch and Jill. There are certain magnetic forces at work, unseen and only dimly understood, that arrange such matters for us. This aspect of the question is the more striking if we remember the origin and significance of Punch. For Punch and Judy is the last lingering survival of the old mediaeval miracle play. In those dark ages the drama was born, and was born in church. The priests thought to instruct the people by performing in character the sacred stories. Punch and Judy, are, of course, Pontius and Judas. Punch, as a Roman governor, speaks with a foreign accent, has a Roman nose, and a hump on his back. The hump grew out of the tradition that, after the crucifixion of the Saviour, Pontius was haunted by the devil, who sat on his back to the end. In the subsequent disgrace and exile of Pilate, he was followed day and night by his dog. And so Toby appears in the Punch and Judy show, his name being derived from the dog Tobias in the Apocrypha. Judas has been transformed into a woman, partly to suit the exigencies of the play, and partly because he wore a flowing robe after the fashion of the East. So there you have the whole story. And, seen in that light, what could be more striking than the association of Punch and Judy, of Pontius Pilate and Judas Iscariot? What was there to bring together Pontius, the haughty

official of Imperial Rome, and Judas, the obscure Galilean peasant? Nationality, geography, racial prejudice, rank, temperament—everything fought against any such conjunction. And yet, and yet, Punch belongs to Judy, and Judy belongs to Punch, and so it came to pass that, in the culminating tragedy of this world's story, Judas guiltily betrayed the Saviour and Pontius guiltily condemned Him, and Pontius and Judas —Punch and Judy—have been indissolubly associated through all the ages since.

Surely, too, the perennial popularity of Punch and Judy is an evidence of the latent chivalry of the race. A mob may not be mealy-mouthed in matters of morals; yet, in the tales that it reads and the plays that it patronizes, it dearly loves to see vice put to shame, and virtue made triumphant. The villain must always go to the felon's cell, and the hero must always lead the fair heroine to the altar. The most debased crowd in the world would insist upon that; and it is interesting to seek a reason for their inflexible demand. Is it not a proof of the enthronement of conscience? However far action may lag behind knowledge, it shows that the recognition of right and wrong is there. However besmirched the life itself may have been, there remain in the soul regnant voices that will not speak falsely. They will not lower the purity of their lofty

standard. And thus it strangely happens that the man who has himself dipped his fingers into his neighbour's pocket vociferously applauds the capture of a thief; and a man who has violated the seventh commandment cheers to the echo the ultimate vindication of outraged virtue.

And, travelling along this line, we come upon the crowd laughing immoderately at a Punch and Judy show. And in their laughter I detect a profound spiritual significance. It is what Victor Hugo would call the laughter of the soul at itself. For Punch is Pontius. The man who laughs at Pontius may all the while be crucifying to himself the Son of God afresh and putting Him to an open shame; but his laughter is an unconscious witness to the fact that, in his deepest soul, he recognizes that the rejection of the Christ is worthy of the derision of the ages. Judy is Judas. And he who laughs at Judas, though he may himself be selling his Lord for thirty pieces of silver, witnesses by his laughter to the eternal contempt that such a betrayal deserves.

X

CHARADES

THEY were playing at charades—those children of Galilee—and the Lord stood in the midst of them. Perhaps more often than we think He stands among the children at their play. Robert Louis Stevenson said as much years ago:

"When children are playing alone on the green,
In comes the Playmate that never was seen,
When children are happy, and lonely, and good,
The Friend of the Children comes out of the wood.

"Nobody heard Him, and nobody saw,
His is a picture you never could draw,
But He's sure to be present, abroad or at home,
When children are happy or playing alone."

At any rate, it is very pleasant to think of the world's saddest and most pathetic Figure tenderly watching the frolics in the Galilean market-place. Around Him swept the storm of romp and revelry. The furious fun and mad merriment made their own peculiar appeal to Him. And in those rich and wondrous after-years, that riot of exuberant child-like and mad-cap laughter came unexpectedly back upon Him. "Where-

unto shall I liken the men of this generation?" He asked Himself one day. *"Whereunto?"* He seems to have exhausted all His usual similes, and stands hesitating and perplexed. Could He not liken men, as we do, to soldiers in the strenuous clash of battle, or to labourers stained with the sweat and dust of toil? No; these figures will not fit. It is the old scene in the playground that rushes back upon Him. He remembers the charades. "This generation is like unto children sitting in the market-place and calling unto their fellows and saying, 'We have piped unto you and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you and ye have not lamented.'" The charades, beneath His touch, flashed into parable. They reflected the three greatest spiritual tragedies of His age and of ours. Men are very silly, and very superficial, and very sulky.

I

Jesus was painfully impressed by the *silliness* of men. Their levity grated upon Him. They could only be likened to children romping in the market-place. And the market-place was no place for such sport. In the market-place the stern conflict of commerce was being waged. Competition was keen. Hard-headed men were constantly on the alert for the cheapest market in which to buy and the dearest in which to sell.

In the market-place fortunes were made and lost. Frugal house-wives wrestled there with the pressing problems of their domestic purchases. Men were made and men were ruined in the market-place. But what did boys and girls care? They scampered helter-skelter, hither and thither. They made the old place ring again with their peals of merry laughter. To them the market-place was a playground; and it was nothing more. And Jesus told the fathers that they were no better than their boys. They treated life with levity. They were like children playing in the market-place. They lacked the undertone of seriousness. They were incapable of gravity. Nothing worse could be said of any people.

I fancy that if some old Galilean who listened to that stinging rebuke could revisit Christendom to-day he would suggest to us that his generation held no monopoly in levity. He would look upon the greatest Christian peoples of the modern world. And then he would think of the comparative simplicity of Galilean tastes. And he would bequeath the Master's rebuke to our generation as being much more worthy of it than his own. Nothing in human experience is more exasperating than for a man, to whom you are speaking on matters of weight and urgency, to smirk, and grin, and leer whilst you are doing so. We need dread nothing more than the horror of becoming

a smirking people; a nation from which high seriousness has vanished and in which solemnity has decayed; a volatile, frivolous, giggling community; a generation like unto children romping in the market-place.

II

Jesus was painfully impressed by the *superficiality* of men. Even when they did at last appear to be serious, it was really only mimicry and make-believe. They were "just pretending." As He stood in the market-place that day He heard the pipes and saw the dance. But it was only an imaginary wedding. Again He heard the melancholy mourning and the plaintive wails of lamentation. But it was just for fun. It was not a real funeral. It was all a charade. And the pathos of it all is that mimicry never gets beyond the mere external drapery of the thing it imitates, and usually makes itself ridiculous in consequence. Macaulay says that, after the death of Byron, men sought to persuade themselves that they possessed his genius by adopting his style of necktie. After the Restoration, men attempted to recall the Puritanism of Milton and of Cromwell by talking through the nose with the same horrible whine which had characterized some of the most distinguished leaders of the Commonwealth! The students of Melanchthon

emulated their master in the unevenness of his shoulders! And aspiring young tenors who adored Sims Reeves used to ape his peculiar way of stepping on to the platform! That was as far as these poor imitators could get. And, in exactly the same way, the make-believe weddings in the market-place only got as far as the outward trappings of the ceremony. The depths of the soul were not broken up; the poignant passions were not stirred; the strange admixture of bridal smiles and tears were conspicuously absent. And the make-believe funerals copied only the outward pageantry of the solemn obsequies. The tortured cry of a lonely soul, the quivering anguish of a breaking heart, were not there. That is the mockery of superficiality.

"That boy," said the doctor, in one of Myrtle Reed's best-known stories, "that boy has genius."

"Possibly," replied the great music-master, to whom the remark had been made, "but he has no heart, no feeling. *He is all technique!*"

Is it not often so? Two men sit side by side in the same pew; two women sing the same pieces in the same choir; two brothers walk up to the house of God in company; two sisters kneel together at the same family altar. In each case they seem so much alike. But they only *seem* so much alike. The one is as deeply moved as the bride at a wedding, or the widow at a funeral.

The other is acting a part. It is all technique! That was Christ's awful meaning when He spoke of the charades. There is no sin like the sin of *seeming*.

III

Jesus was painfully impressed by the *sulkiness* of men. There were certain children in the market-place who, when the game of weddings was proposed, danced as soon as their companions piped. There were others who, when funerals were suggested, wailed as soon as their companions mourned. But there was a third class. There were those who complained that weddings were far too gay and that funerals were far too glum. They would respond neither to the piping nor the mourning. It was unto these peevish and petulant children that Jesus likened the men of His generation. Like the children who would not play at funerals, they would not respond to John, who came fasting. And, like the children who would not play at weddings, they would not respond to Jesus, who came feasting. This third class represents the Church's everlasting problem. There are those who are impressed by a stately liturgy and an ornate ritual. There are others again who are only affected by severe and Puritanical simplicity. But what of those who respond to neither? There

are those who are allured by the wooing note of Barnabas; and there are others who are alarmed by the warning note of Boanerges. But what of those who can be neither coaxed nor cowed? That is the problem that breaks a minister's heart. It broke the heart of Jesus. "It was amazing to me," Mark Rutherford confides to us in his *Autobiography*, "that I could pour myself out as I did, and yet make so little impression." And, in his *Deliverance*, he reverts to the same agonizing mystery. "The tradesman who makes a good coat enjoys the satisfaction of having fitted and pleased his customer; a bricklayer, if he be diligent, is rewarded by knowing that his master understands his value; but I never knew what it was to receive a single response."

And what then? The Master's application of His graceful parable to the irresponsive souls who had answered neither to the austere monasticism of John, nor to the tender melody of His own message, is unmistakable. We, too, are face to face with colossal silliness, amazing superficiality, stupendous sulkiness. But we are to preserve our sanity. We must not become hysterical on the one hand nor nonchalant on the other. In the presence of the world's appalling apathy, we are not to adopt the language of despair, as though the great victorious note of the gospel had been prematurely struck. Nor,

on the other hand, are we to reconcile ourselves to things as they are, accepting those conditions as final and irrevocable. The progress of the Church is to be neither a dirge nor a dance. The rollicking optimist and the cheerless pessimist have both lost their way. Jesus was neither. We are to avoid both Scylla and Charybdis. We must be songful, but we must be serious. We are to look out on the world, as He did, with triumph in our hearts and tears in our eyes. And—who knows?—it may yet come to pass that the Church's dauntless certainty of conquest, and her tender eloquence of tears, will impress even the thoughtless children who are playing in the market-place.

PART III

I

"MILLIONS! MILLIONS!"

A FEW friends of mine made it their custom to meet together for prayer very early on Sunday mornings. At length there came a pouring wet Sunday morning—a perfect drencher. When one of these sturdy souls came down to the ordinary service at eleven o'clock that morning, he was playfully saluted by a weaker brother, who usually admired his friend's sunrise devotion from within the security of his blankets. "Ah!" he said; "and how many did you have at early prayers this morning?" But the good man was not to be shamed in that way. He is a rather rough diamond and no scholar, but he is one of Nature's most perfect gentlemen, and an unconscious poet into the bargain. "Oh," he replied, "it was grand! *We had all the Shining Ones there this morning!*" I thought the reply one of the most adroit and charming that I had ever heard. It reminded me irresistibly of that fine entry in Grant Duff's *Notes from a Diary.* An old priest was trudging home through the deep snow after early Mass on the morning of All Saints' Day, when a man stopped him to ask how

many had been at his service. "Millions! Millions!" he replied. Farther on Grant Duff again refers to the incident, and quotes a comment of a friend: "That is a lovely story about all the saints at Mass; quite lovely. It reminds me of a line I always liked:

'Multitudes, multitudes stood up in bliss.'

One imagines them as a field standing thick with corn."

Now these two stories, one from my own experience and one from literature, have come to my mind with quite captivating force to-day, for it is All Saints' Day. It is one of the few days of the Christian year for which I can get up much enthusiasm. I would not miss it from my holy days on any account whatever. I have a great deal of sympathy with James Russell Lowell:

"One day, of holy days the crest,
I, though no Churchman, love to keep,
All Saints'—the unknown good that rest
In God's still memory, folded deep:
The bravely dumb that did their deed,
And scorned to blot it with a name,
Men of the plain, heroic breed,
That loved heaven's silence more than fame."

I

A man must be very blind to spiritual values

if he sees no stern practical significance about this matter of the *Millions*. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews saw something far more than sentiment in it. He reels off that soul-stirring list of historic memories which we know as the eleventh chapter—"the Westminster Abbey of the Bible," as Dr. Jowett calls it—and then he thinks of my friend's *Shining Ones*, the old priest's *Millions*. "Wherefore," he adds, "seeing we also are compassed about with *so great a cloud of witnesses*, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." The imagery is vivid and clear. The *great cloud of witnesses* suggests the spacious amphitheatre, with its tens of thousands of spectators, rising tier above tier like an encircling cloud and overawing the performer as he first enters the arena. But a deeper meaning lies beneath the surface. For the word implies that the spectators include those who have already played their part in the arena. The combatant of the morning is the onlooker of the afternoon. And may not the very presence and plaudits of the hero of the morning, as he watches the contest of the afternoon, inspire the wrestlers and the runners to more strenuous effort? That was Lowell's thought. Or, at least, it was Mrs. Lowell's. Perhaps her poems are not as well

known as they deserve to be. At any rate, she says in one of them:

"If Death uplift me, even thus should I,
Companioned by the silver spirits high
And stationed on the sunset's crimson towers,
Bend longing over earth's broad stretch of bowers,
To where my love beneath their shades might lie;
For I should weary of the endless blue,
Should weary of my ever-growing light,
If that one soul, so beautiful and true,
Were hidden by earth's vapours from my sight."

II

The action of the hero, with his laurels on his brow, in taking his seat among the spectators, obviously means that *the performance is not yet over.* He has done his part, but his part is not *the only part.* He now looks on to see others do theirs. And the respect that is everywhere shown to him, and the coveted green leaves upon his brow, are an evidence to those in the ring that victory is possible. Heroism did not cease with his coronation. Which reminds me of a story, and a good one. It occurs in the life of Wendell Phillips, the heroic conqueror of slavery. They had been sitting by the fire, the old hero of a hundred fights on one side of the hearth, and a young friend on the other. The younger man never understood how that memorable evening slipped so swiftly away. Memory had flushed the cheeks of the veteran abolitionist;

the heroic days of the long ago came rushing back upon him; his tongue was unloosed; and "the old man eloquent" completely lost himself in the thrilling recital. The youth sat enthralled. At last he recognized, with a start, that the evening was gone. He rose to leave.

"Mr. Phillips," he said, as he took the old man's hand, "if I had lived in your time, I think *I* should have been heroic too!"

The veteran, who had accompanied his young visitor to the door, was roused. He pointed down the street, and drew the attention of his companion to the glaring saloons and to all the flaunting indications of audacious vice. His voice was tremulous with indignation.

"Young man," he said, "you *are* living in my time, and in God's time! Be sure of this: No man could have been heroic *then* who is not heroic *now*. Good-night!"

III

Those millions of eyes are like a sky full of stars. There is something very searching about them. They seem at times to look us through and through. I do not wonder that Tennyson asks, in *In Memoriam:*

> "Do we indeed desire the dead
> Should still be near us at our side?
> Is there no baseness we would hide?
> No inner vileness that we dread?"

They remind us that we have something to live up to. "If you lose what I've won," cried the old Prussian, Frederick Wilhelm, to his son, "I'll laugh at you out of my grave!" And, in the great after days, the old man's eyes seemed to be ever upon the Emperor as he passed from victory to victory. I like to think of those Scandinavian veterans who, when a young recruit was buckling on his armour for the first time, took him to the halls of his ancestors. As he gazed at one rugged old face after another, some scarred laureate would recite the exploits of those heroic forefathers. And as the youth heard story after story of splendid sacrifice and doughty deed, he would feel his soul glow with intense desire to prove himself worthy of so valiant a descent. In his *Venetia,* Lord Beaconsfield, too, tells of the old tutor who, having completed the education of a young heir of a noble house, took him, before parting from him, to the picture-gallery of the castle. And then, having told his pupil of the virtues that had distinguished all his line, he implored him to acquit himself as a worthy son of such worthy sires. It is the same thought; it is the philosophy of the *Millions;* it is the inspiration of the *Shining Ones.* We are compassed about by a great cloud of witnesses. The heroes are looking on; and the very fact that they are looking on shows that there is still something

for which they look. They account the world's record of valour unfinished until *our* part has been played. Their eyes are strained to behold the deeds with which we match their splendid records.

And surely there is something very inspiring about that sky full of eyes! There is nothing supercilious, nothing hypercritical, nothing contemptuous about those enthroned spectators. What a pleasant thing it is at a good cricket match to see the heroes of a previous generation delighting in the prowess of the players of to-day! And, speaking of cricket, I am reminded of a good story; is it not Henry Drummond's? An old county cricketer had lost his sight. He was stone blind. And it was the grief of all his days that he could not see his own boy play the great game. The son became the crack bat of the school team, and used to lead his father to the ground. But, beyond hearing with inexpressible delight the comments of the crowd on his boy's play, he got small satisfaction from it. One day he suddenly died. The following Saturday an important match was to be played. Other members of the team, who knew of the lad's affection for his blind father, took it for granted that their best bat would be absent. But, to their surprise, he strolled down in his flannels, and presented himself for play. And he batted that

day as he had never done before. He snicked and cut and pulled and drove with magnificent audacity and judgement. His companions were bewildered. He rattled up a century in no time, and won the match with ease. After the applause of the pavilion had died down, he turned to a comrade and asked:

"How did I play?"

"Never better; you outdid yourself. What did it all mean?"

"Why, you see," said the young hero, "*it was the first time my father ever saw me bat!*"

It would be a pity to labour the point after a story like that. Napoleon knew what he was doing when, in his Egyptian campaign, he pointed to the Pyramids and cried, "*Soldiers, forty centuries look down upon you!*" It must be a sluggish soul that cannot respond to such an appeal.

And so I sit here in my study on this All Saints' Day, and think of the *Millions*.

"Saints of the early dawn of Christ,
Saints of imperial Rome,
Saints of the cloistered Middle Age,
Saints of the modern home;
Saints of the soft and sunny east,
Saints of the frozen seas,
Saints of the isles that wave their palms
In the fair Antipodes;

Saints of the marts and busy streets,
  Saints of the squalid lanes,
Saints of the silent solitudes,
  Of the prairies and the plains;
Saints who were wafted to the skies
  In the torment robe of flame,
Saints who have graven on men's thoughts
  A monumental name."

Yes, my friend is right; without a doubt all the *Shining Ones* are here this morning!

II

WHITE ELEPHANTS

I CANNOT exactly claim the reverence and attention which we all accord without stint or question to the hunter of big game. I have never shaken the dust of civilization from my feet and set off for the interior of Africa, the jungles of Bengal, the Western prairies, or the hills of Ceylon. I have, however, read all that Sir Samuel Baker, Major Stevenson-Hamilton, Mr. Stewart White, and other big-game hunters have to say; and some of the most exciting moments I have ever known have been spent in their very excellent company. It is great sport to sit in a cosy chair in a sheltered corner of a shady verandah and to experience, one by one, all the glorious thrills and indescribable sensations of the chase. You hear the distant trumpeting of the herd; you share all the hopes and fears of the hunter as he creeps nearer and nearer to his quarry; you hear the great trees bend and break as the angry monsters rush and charge; and then, with a flush of excitement that almost makes your heart stand still, you see the huge beast roll over beneath the sportsman's magnificent aim. This is as near as I have ever got—

or ever expect to get—to adventure of this heroic kind. Yet I have been doing a little big-game hunting on my own account. I have been on the track of white elephants; and certainly I have no reason to complain of lack of sport. None of the herds that I have ever seen described by visitors to Africa or Ceylon can compare with those upon which I have come in the course of my recent quest.

Let me, after the approved fashion of literary sportsmen, begin by describing the creature. And here the subject becomes instantly complicated, for there are, I must explain, several varieties of the beast. There are white elephants *and* white elephants. In its original setting the term connoted "a gift which occasions the recipient more trouble than it is worth; a white elephant being a common gift of the Kings of Siam to a courtier they wished to ruin." Nobody would suggest that, in this sinister form, the phenomenon is particularly conspicuous among us. At the opposite pole, it may be reasonably maintained that all the operations of the ordinary commercial world resolve themselves into a perfectly innocuous bartering and marketing of white elephants. Here is a grocer with tons of sugar in his cellar. What does he want with tons of sugar? Considered only in relation to himself, his stock is a white elephant; but he

deliberately finds houseroom for that white elephant in order that he may serve his customers and enrich himself in the process. The same thought inevitably occurs to one on being shown the prodigious stores of any other tradesman. The miles of neatly folded materials on the shelves of the draper; the casks of drugs and powders in the storeroom of the chemist; the formidable array of carcases displayed by the enterprising butcher,—these represent so many reminders of the fact that the commerce of life is largely manipulated by the wholesale purchase of white elephants. But between these two interpretations of the phrase—the one as repugnant as the other is serviceable—there is another phase of the matter; and it is this aspect of the question that has brought me to my desk. It is this particular variety of white elephant that I have just been hunting.

Surprising as it may seem, I came upon a very large herd of white elephants almost under the shadow of Windsor Castle. A newspaper lying at this moment on my desk tells of a White Elephant Exchange, inaugurated under royal auspices and opened by Princess Alexander of Teck, which was the other day conducted at Windsor. The white elephants concerned consisted of various articles which the donors found in their possession but for which they had no real use.

Each donor received as he entered the exchange a ticket bearing a number, which entitled him to somebody else's white elephant; and if he did not fancy the gift which fell to his lot, he returned it, and it was sold for the augmentation of the patriotic fund. It is averred that when those who desired to assist in this original form of philanthropy ransacked their homes in search of white elephants, they were astonished at the multiplicity and variety of those animals to be found among their household gods. I can easily believe it. Some time ago the residents of the city in which I dwell were invited to search their homes in a very similar quest, and to donate to patriotic purposes any goods or chattels for which they had no further use. Carts passed along the streets to convey these articles to the auction rooms. You never saw such a procession of white elephants! No menagerie since the world began could hold a candle to it. Comedy and tragedy jostled each other in the roadway. Here were the toys of little children who had passed beyond the need of all such entertainment; here was an old-fashioned mangle and a still older spinning-jenny; and here were ramshackle old bits of furniture that had long ago given place to successors of a later pattern, and had since their displacement, only littered up the house.

As I passed, in the course of my hunt, from one herd of white elephants to another, I was driven to the conclusion that our haphazard and somewhat ridiculous etiquette of gift-making has something to do with the enormous quantities of game that I discovered. There are certain occasions—weddings, birthdays, Christmas, and the like—when, according to our present social usage, decency demands that a present shall be sent. Nobody would rebel very bitterly against this engaging custom if only his mind could be entirely emancipated from the torturing apprehension that, sooner or later, the dainty gift which he is at such pains to purchase will take its place among the melancholy ranks of the white elephants. Nine times out of ten the unwritten law that renders a present mandatory forbids any sane investigation as to the desires or requirements of the prospective recipient. It is equally indelicate, if not actually impossible, to ascertain the intentions of other donors. The result is inevitable. One has to determine between the dreamily aesthetic or the severely utilitarian. He purchases, in the one case, a beautifully bound *édition-de-luxe,* knowing that it will be rapturously admired and eternally unread; or, in the other, he fixes his choice on some eminently useful article, feeling as he does so that in all human probability half a dozen other

articles almost exactly like it will be simultaneously received. And, in either instance, the danger of adding to the stock of white elephants is sufficiently grave to awaken embarrassing anticipations.

We ministers are sinners above all men on the face of the earth in this respect. We allow white elephants to multiply about us like rabbits in a district to which a gun never comes. Unless we take care, we shall be trampled to death by them. Look at our libraries—at least, look at mine! All round the room, into which I should be ashamed to show a lady, there are uncomely stacks of books that ought to find hospitality on the shelves. But the walls are crowded with shelves, and the shelves are packed with books. At least, it looks like it. But it is purely an optical illusion, and deceives everybody but myself. As a matter of fact, however, these latest arrivals, packed up so unceremoniously on the floor, are being cheated out of their rightful places on the shelves by an enormous herd of white elephants. There are books that we bought by mistake; books that we know to be valueless; books whose room is of much more value than their company. Yet, by an odd trick that books play upon us, we let them stay on the shelves whilst their superiors sprawl in undignified debasement on the floor! "I have read," says Sir W. Robertson Nicoll, "I

have read, and I find it to be true, that a man who loves books, unless he is exceptionally rich, is always more and more tormented to find room for them. They grow and grow, and the wall space does not grow, and the shelves do not grow. There is only one course possible, and it cannot be postponed for very long. The library must be weeded, and the weeding must be of a ruthless character." This has driven me to make for myself a good resolution. I happen to have a birthday once a year. I intend for the rest of my life, whenever that auspicious date comes round, to set off after breakfast hunting white elephants. I shall go to the study first of all, and anybody who listens at the door will hear the thud, thud, thud, as the beasts fall upon the floor, and he will know that I am having good sport. And for a few days thereafter it will be reasonably safe for a lady to enter the room.

The problem is, however, capable of still larger implications. Looking round us here in Australia, it is impossible to blink the fact that the greatest problem in the development of the Commonwealth faces us just at this point. It is all very well for me to be sitting here beneath the Southern Cross calmly discussing the subject of white elephants. But what about Australia itself? Australia is a huge continent, only the southern fringe of which is at present being

exploited. The remainder is to all intents and purposes a white elephant. How is it to be delivered from that obnoxious classification? The man who can satisfactorily answer that question is the statesman for whom the Empire is anxiously waiting.

And just once more. My friend Arthur Jenkinson is a good fellow. He is exceedingly popular in the office; he is always welcome at the club and in other places where men do mostly congregate. His wife thinks there is nobody like him, and his children clap their hands as they hear him come whistling up the gravel path. But that is as far as it goes. You never see him at church; he is doing no work for which the world will bless him when he is gone; and, as far as one can judge, he is laying up for himself no treasure in the world invisible. Years ago he sat spellbound at his mother's knee while she unfolded to him that sweet and gracious story with which no other story can compare; and in those days his unspoiled heart responded to its charm. The treasure of the ages was poured into his soul, but he has never made use of it. He has allowed the holy faith of his childhood to take its place among the ranks of the white elephants. It is like the family Bible on the whatnot—very precious, but never used.

III

"THAT WILL DO IT!"

It was at the Palace Beautiful. Christian had been opening his heart to Prudence, one of the sisters of that lovely place. He confesses with shame that he still thinks occasionally of the City of Destruction, and even cherishes within his breast some of the gross imaginations that once delighted him. He bears witness, too, that at other times he is able to completely overcome these inward and carnal cogitations, "and they," he says, "are golden hours in which such things happen to me."

"Can you remember," asks Prudence, "by what means you find your annoyances at times as if they were vanquished?"

"Yes," replies Christian, "when I think what I saw at the Cross, *that will do it;* and when I look upon my broidered coat, *that will do it;* also when I look into the roll that I carry in my bosom, *that will do it;* and when my thoughts wax warm about whither I am going, *that will do it!*"

The conversation was a remarkable one, and is worth thinking about.

I

"When I think of what I saw at *the Cross,* that will do it!" There can be no mistaking Bunyan's meaning. The Cross was to him the centre of everything, the sun around which every other planet revolved, the hub of his spiritual universe. "So I saw in my dream that just as Christian came up with the Cross, his burden loosed from off his shoulders, and fell from off his back, and began to tumble, and so continued to do, till it came to the mouth of the Sepulchre, where it fell in and I saw it no more. Then was Christian glad and lightsome, and said with a merry heart, 'He hath given me rest by His sorrow and life by His death.' Then he stood still for a while, to look and wonder, for it was very surprising to him that the sight of the Cross should thus ease him of his burden. He looked therefore, and looked again, even till the springs that were in his head sent the waters down his cheeks." And whenever, from that time forth, Christian was troubled with enticements to evil, he had but to reflect upon what he saw upon the Cross, and his annoyances were as though they were not.

There can be no doubt but that Bunyan is in line with all the great masters, the prophets and

princes of the inner life. Isaac Watts has reflected the same profound experience in the greatest of all his hymns:

> "When I survey the wondrous Cross
> On which the Prince of Glory died,
> My richest gain I count but loss,
> And pour contempt on all my pride."

And on Christian's testimony to Prudence, Mr. Mark Guy Pearse has modelled one of the most affecting and effective passages in "Daniel Quorm." Poor old Frankey Vivian, it will be remembered, was dying. He lay propped up with pillows and breathing heavily. Daniel Quorm was his class-leader, and visited him regularly. On the very last day of his life Frankey told Daniel of a dreadful struggle in which he had been engaged with the Tempter.

"Last night," he said, "I had a terrible bout with un, sure enough, but, bless the Lord, I came off more than conqueror."

Daniel inquired as to the secret of his victory.

"Well," said the old man slowly and solemnly, "I took him up the Hill of Calvary. Ah, what a sight that is, dear leader, isn't it? And all for me! Why, it do melt my heart for to think about it.

" 'There,' I says, 'thou poor old Tempter, canst thou see Him now? Pushed by the crowd; hooted

at from all sides; there is my Lord, my own Blessed Jesus! Dost see that crown of thorns upon His holy head? Look! He staggers under that awful Cross—for me: for poor old Frankey Vivian! And canst thou see Him hanging on the Cross—for me: naked, bleeding, torn, dyin' for my soul? There—that is how He loves me—He gave Himself for me!"

Frankey's voice failed him for a minute or two. His eyes were fixed as if the scene stood out there visibly before him.

"My own Blessed Lord! an' to think that I could ever have doubted Thee!"

Then presently he went on again in a cheery way, turning his face to Dan'el: "Well, my dear leader, I looked round to see what the old Tempter thought o' *that*—and, bless 'ee, he was gone, clean, clean gone! I tell 'ee what I think,—I don't believe he can set foot 'pon Calvary's Hill; so I do mean to keep right up under the Cross, out of his road if I can. Bless the Lord, I am right in under there now, my dear leader; and 'tis wonderful shelter—a beautiful place, hid in the clefts o' the rock."

Then Frankey sank back exhausted. Dan'el still held the wasted hand in his own, but his heart was too full for speech.

Yes, *that* will do it! "When I think what I saw at the Cross, *that* will do it!"

II

"And when I look upon my *Broidered Coat,* that will do it." Oh, that broidered coat! Carlyle has written a philosophy of clothes, but he never struck so deep a note as this. How well I remember that, in the dear old home that sheltered my childhood, the home in which my parents still abide, there were two huge beautifully-bound volumes. In the best room in the house they occupied a shelf on the what-not all to themselves. A stranger, glancing at them, would have supposed them to be family Bibles. One was. The other was a magnificent large-type edition of *Pilgrim's Progress,* with handsome steel engravings. On Sunday afternoons, as a great treat, we were allowed, under suitable guidance, to look at the pictures. And I remember, as though it were yesterday, that they divided themselves, in our minds, into two distinct classes, according to the clothes that Christian wore. It was the same with *Robinson Crusoe.* If we opened the book at random, we could tell the stage in the story by the clothes in the picture. If Crusoe was dressed in his goatskin suit and furry cap, we knew that he was on his island; if not, we knew that he had left it. So in *Pilgrim's Progress,* there were the pictures that represented Christian in rags and tatters, and with

the burden on his back; and there were the pictures that represented him either with his beautiful broidered coat, or with the shining armour by which that coat was afterwards covered. If he was dressed in rags, we knew that he had not yet reached the Cross; if he wore the broidered coat, we knew that the great change had taken place. For it was "as he stood looking and weeping before the Cross that, behold, three Shining Ones came to him and saluted him with 'Peace be to thee!' So the *first* said to him, 'Thy sins be forgiven'; the *second* stripped him of his rags and clothed him with change of raiment; the *third* gave him a roll with a seal on it. So they went on their way. Then Christian gave three leaps for joy, and went on singing."

The broidered coat was therefore the visible emblem of a great change, and in adopting this singular imagery, Bunyan was following the most exalted precedents. "Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment." And what of the man out of whom the devils had departed, who was found "sitting at the feet of Jesus, *clothed,* and in his right

mind"? And what of the Prodigal Son? Here is a philosophy of clothes, then, that leaves *Sartor Resartus* far behind!

"When I look upon my broidered coat, *that* will do it!" Bunyan means that when he thinks of the change that Christ has already effected in his life, the idea of denying his Lord appears preposterous. In his *Living Christ and the Four Gospels,* Dr. Dale maintains that, if by some extraordinary collapse, all the evidence on which our faith appears to rest suddenly failed us, those who have once experienced the grace of Christ would go on just as if nothing had happened. Their faith does not rest upon evidence that can be shaken. They glance at the broidered coat; they remember the rags that they once wore; and it is enough.

III

"Also when I look into *the Roll* that I carry in my bosom, that will do it!" It is needless to labour the point. Bunyan had the very highest authority for his confident declaration. For of what can he have been thinking but of the Temptation in the Wilderness? That thrice-repeated "*It is written*" is among the monumental things in the sacred records. That precious scroll in the carpenter's home at Nazareth must have been bought at enormous sacrifice; but it

was evidently not for ornament. Dr. Campbell Morgan remarks upon the Saviour's marvellous familiarity with even the most obscure passages of the Holy Word. His quotations are notable, he points out, for their immediate applicability to the need of the moment. Such quotations could only be made by one who, from a child, had known the Holy Scriptures. Who can fail to admire the foresight and divine sagacity which marked the wise carpenter's purchase of that costly roll?

This is a great secret, this secret of being forearmed. A man cannot snatch up a sword and rush into the battle. He must, together with the possession of a sword, have learned the art of swordsmanship. He must know how to use his weapon. In his stirring description of the battle of Killiecrankie, Macaulay vividly portrays the end of that famous fight. Dundee gave the Highlanders the order to charge. The men threw away everything but their broadswords, and rushed forward with a fearful yell. "The Lowlanders prepared to receive the shock; but this was a long and awkward process; and the soldiers were still fumbling with the muzzles of their guns and the handles of their bayonets when the whole flood of Macleans, Macdonalds, and Camerons, came down upon them. In two minutes the battle was lost and won." How often

have I seen a tempted spirit in a similar plight! In the hour in which faith is challenged, and honour threatened, he rushes frantically for a Bible. But he knows not how to use it, and whilst he is still fumbling among the unfamiliar pages, the foe makes himself master of every part of the field. The Duke of Wellington said that Waterloo was won on the playing-grounds of Eton. Certainly, the victory in the wilderness was won in those long and leisured evenings when Mary taught her holy Son the wondrous Word. And Christian's triumph was achieved in the study of that roll to which he applied himself for the first time at the Cross. "Thy Word have I hid in my heart," explained the sagacious Psalmist, "that I might not sin against Thee." "When I look into the roll that I carry in my bosom, *that* will do it!"

IV

"And when my thoughts wax warm about *whither I am going*, that will do it!"

"And what is it," inquired Prudence, "that makes you so desirous to go to Mount Zion?"

"Why, there I hope to see Him alive that did hang dead upon the Cross. For, to tell you truth, I love Him, because I was by Him eased of my burden, and I would fain be with the company that shall continually cry 'Holy, holy, holy!'"

Thus abruptly ends the interview. Prudence had no more to ask. She saw clearly enough that he that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as He is pure. "When my thoughts wax warm about whither I am going, *that* will do it."

The Cross—*that* will do it!

The Coat—*that* will do it!

The Roll—*that* will do it!

The City—*that* will do it!

Happy is he who is thus four times fortified, like a city four-square and impregnable on every side.

IV

ANNIVERSARIES AT EBENEZER

I

EBENEZER was celebrating its anniversary. For twenty-five years, or, as the speakers expressed it, a quarter of a century, the little sanctuary had received within its walls the faithful souls who found its worship a delight. But the joy which is almost inseparable from anniversary gatherings was on this occasion a chastened one. A rumour was afloat to the effect that the meeting-house had been sold. Everybody knew that for many years the cloud of debt had hung like a pall over the worshippers; and now that the building had grown old-fashioned, unattractive, and sadly out of repair, it was even questionable as to whether or not it could be sold for a sufficient sum to extinguish existing liabilities. Most people were of opinion that Ebenezer had seen better days. And they were right. Years ago, when Attleden was proud at being called a village, the newly erected chapel occupied a plot of ground in a prominent position, and was the admired of all observers. Among all the neighbouring counties, the South of England held no

chapel to compare with it. So thought, at least, the Ebenezerites. But now a carnal progress had lifted Attleden up from the low level of villagedom, and had converted it into a thriving little market town. And, what was still worse, the main thoroughfare had, for some unaccountable reason, wended its way some hundred and fifty yards from Ebenezer, leaving the cherished abode of the Attleden saints at the very bottom of a narrow side-street. Nor had the progress of Attleden meant corresponding progress in the affairs of the meeting-house. The new generation of Attleden cared little for the old-fashioned chapel and its slow-going worshippers. They expressed a decided dissatisfaction with its services, and Frank Fulborough—an exceedingly popular young man, although a son of one of the church members—had on one occasion given utterance to a desire for "something more lively." This showed the good folk at Ebenezer that the world, the flesh, and the devil were doing their worst for the youth of Attleden, and they resolved with more determination than ever to worship the God of their fathers in the old ways.

And now that the little church had reached its twenty-fifth birthday, everybody felt that a crisis was at hand; and the report that the building had been sold only served to confirm the general apprehension.

The attendance at the meeting that Monday evening was larger than usual. The interior of the meeting-house was plain to a degree. The walls were coloured—a long time ago—with a pale-blue distemper, whilst rude, unvarnished beams were more useful than ornamental to the upper portion of the chapel. The one aisle ran up the centre towards the platform, which consisted of a portable arrangement, like a big inverted box, just large enough to hold the deal table, which served for a pulpit, and a couple of chairs. The chair behind the table was occupied by an old, grey-headed man of patriarchal appearance, who was regarded as the father of the church. Deacon Samuels it was who first agitated for its formation and for the erection of Ebenezer. It was his clear, silvery voice that had announced the hymns Sunday after Sunday, with hardly a break, during all those twenty-five years; and when the weather had forbidden the "supplies" to come, he was always there with a printed sermon to read to the assembly of the saints. He had presided at all the anniversary gatherings, and had generally occupied the chair behind the table when it was covered with the neat little white cloth on which stood the broken bread and the wine which showed forth, as the old deacon always put it, "the dear Lord's death until He come." And old Mr. Samuels had

seemed almost as changeless as Ebenezer itself. He had always had grey hairs; he was always venerable and fatherly. He seemed no older now than he did when he presided at that Communion Table for the first time, twenty-five years ago, albeit he was then fifty-eight, whilst now he was eighty-three. Everybody loved him, and it was in a large measure owing to his vigorous personality that the assembly had struggled on for so many years.

The chapel was fairly well filled, for nearly a hundred people had gathered beneath its weather-beaten roof. Some had come out of sheer curiosity; others out of sympathy, although they never knew before that they had any sympathy for poor Ebenezer. A few—regular attendants—had come across the fields as the sun was setting on this lovely evening in the late summer. How that very sun, as it gradually sank over the horizon, leaving the world to darkness, and the summer, fading as it was into death-bringing autumn, seemed in mournful sympathy with their thoughts as they had pondered on Ebenezer! Punctually at the time appointed, Brother Samuels announced the first hymn. There was a touch of pathos in the words as he read them:

> "Thus far my God hath led me on,
> And made His truth and mercy known;
> My hopes and fears alternate rise,
> And comforts mingle with my sighs."

It was sung to the Old Hundredth. After prayer and the reading of the psalm, commencing, "Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations," Mr. Fulborough, sen., a little old man who looked out from behind a large pair of spectacles, read the annual report, after which Mr. Samuels rose to deliver the speech of the evening.

First of all, he expressed his deep gratitude to God for having been spared to see this anniversary. "For a quarter of a century," he said, "the hand of our God has been upon us. How well I remember that evening, twenty-five years ago, when we sat round this Communion Table, and I extended to the other members the right hand of fellowship as we were formed into a church. There were just seven of us. Since then two have fallen asleep, but the other five remain faithful unto this day."

He seemed utterly regardless of the fact that perhaps it might have been desirable had some additions been made to the roll. To him figures were carnal things, and in these days of change and fluctuation it was cause for devout gratitude that the five living members had stood sound in the faith, proof against every wind that blows. Then he narrated the painful circumstances that had driven them to free themselves from debt at the cost of their much-loved meeting-house; and

at least five of those present, including the speaker, were in tears as he explained that this must be at the same time their anniversary and their leave-taking of their beloved Ebenezer. A painful touch of melancholy was felt in the utterances of the speakers who followed, and there was an audible sigh of relief when Mr. Samuels rose and gave out, in a voice choked now and again by sobs, the concluding hymn,

"Come on, my partners in distress."

Several hearts ached as they looked round Ebenezer that night after the meeting. What if it was plain and old-fashioned? It was there that often their hearts had been comforted. And what if all the long-metre hymns had been sung to the Old Hundredth, and the services been dubbed "slow" by the worldly-minded Frank Fulborough and his companions? It was here, not once, nor twice, that they had derived "help from the sanctuary." Once more they looked at the little platform with its ragged Bible and its simple candle-stick; once more they cast affectionate glances round at the hard seats, the plain walls, the rude beams, and at the Communion Table hallowed by a thousand sacred memories, and then they "went out, and it was night."

II

For the next few Sundays the five members,

and one or two faithful friends, met for prayer at the house of the venerable deacon, Mr. Samuels. They could not bring themselves to attend the Established Church and countenance its ritualism, nor could they persuade themselves that there was not a spirit of unholy levity in the services conducted by the Methodists. And so they met in Brother Samuels's kitchen and prayed for the peace of Jerusalem. They would read a psalm together, and twice in those few Sabbaths the hundred and thirty-seventh was called into requisition. In a trembling voice their leader read, "By the rivers of Babylon there we sat down; yea, we wept when we remembered Zion."

"Shall we sing, brethren?" one of the congregation ventured to suggest on the first Sunday in the kitchen.

"How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" replied the veteran in whose abode they were assembled; and so, for the present at any rate, even the Old Hundredth had to be numbered among the treasures of memory.

But five weeks after the closing of Ebenezer a new announcement appeared on the notice-board in front of the porch. It was to the effect that after the building had undergone thorough renovation, repairs, and improvements, services would be held in it every Lord's Day morning

and evening, conducted by the Rev. Arthur Stanton, late of Chelsham College. It seemed that Mr. Stanton's invasion of Attleden was the outcome of a forward movement on the part of the denominational authorities.

The announcement was received with indifference by those who attended the church; but the town gossips made it a matter of general discussion.

"It'll break old Samuels's heart," said one, "to see th' old place done up all spick and span, and a parson in the pulpit."

"Mebbe, mebbe," replied his companion, "but th' Ebenezerites ain't likely to trouble the reverent genelman with their presence overmuch!"

And so it turned out, for Mr. Samuels had reminded his brethren that they were not to be carried about by every wind of doctrine, but to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.

The Rev. Arthur Stanton proved to be a young man possessed of many personal attractions and of considerable ability, and Attleden gave him a hearty greeting. The young men and maidens from the shops and stores attended the services, and the walls of Ebenezer almost groaned at the strain put upon their dimensions. Needless to say, the old table and candlestick had disap-

peared, and the dim religious light of earlier days had given place to a number of bright, though less Puritanical, electric lights. One could hardly bring himself to believe that he was back at old Ebenezer again. Mr. Stanton announced the hymns in a clear, ringing voice, and the sermon—thoughtful, liberally illustrated, and delivered in earnest tones and grave—was in strange contrast with the solemn and almost sepulchral utterances to which the interior of Ebenezer had become accustomed.

In Mr. Samuels's kitchen, on the fourth Sunday after Mr. Stanton's advent into Attleden, the faithful few were gathered for prayer and the devout worship of God. Mr. Samuels had just read a psalm, when Mr. Fulborough rose, and, in a voice husky with emotion, proceeded to address the company:

"Brethren, I never was a speaker after no fashion, but I ask ye to rejoice with me, for my Frank has been called by divine grace, and is walking in newness of life."

There was a momentary look of suspicion on the faces of two or three of his hearers, but Brother Fulborough continued:

"I've allers been faithful to the cause at Ebenezer, and have humbly sought to adorn by a consistent life the doctrines as we've defended; but I feel as the Lord is at Ebenezer still, and

I'm going back again, and my lad shall serve his father's God in his father's sanctuary."

III

Ebenezer was celebrating its anniversary—the third since the Rev. Arthur Stanton's settlement. The building had been enlarged and renovated beyond all recognition since the young minister's advent. A well-attended public tea had been held, and the evening meeting was about to commence. The chapel was well filled, and at the appointed time the pastor took the chair. The minister from the Methodist church occupied a seat on the platform. Prayer and singing were followed by the annual report, read by "our newly appointed Church secretary, Mr. Frank Fulborough." Next, Mr. Stanton himself delivered a cheering and earnest address in harmony with the gladness that prevailed. Other speakers followed, and when the hour was getting late, the chairman said:

"I think we can hardly do better than ask our venerable friend and brother, Deacon Samuels, to say a word or two, and close the meeting."

The old man's white hairs were even whiter now. There was a slight stoop at the shoulders, but he might have been an old soldier, such was the dignity and stateliness of his bearing. There was a glory upon his brow that is more easy to

record than to define; and had the chairman and audience known that this would be his last anniversary, nay, his last appearance at Ebenezer, and that, ere another Sabbath came on its way, they would have laid the veteran in his wreath-crowned grave, maybe it would only have enhanced that mystic glow.

He rose and repeated slowly:

"When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing. Then said they among the heathen: 'The Lord hath done great things for them.' The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad."

"Brethren," he continued, "let us sing:

> 'Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,
> Praise Him, all creatures here below,
> Praise Him above, ye heavenly host,
> Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.'"

And once more the tune was the Old Hundredth.

V

THE MINISTRY OF NONSENSE

It was at Wedge Bay that I first made up my mind to say a good word for nonsense. I had a short illness a few years ago, and as soon as I could clamber out of bed I took a cab and a steamer and made straight for Wedge Bay. There the bush and the beach, with all the other beauties that I have previously described, conspired to set me on my feet again. Medicine, too, I took; but one of the most precious packets of physic reached me by the first mail after my arrival. I have no idea who sent it. He was a genius, whoever he was. The package contained six issues of the London *Punch;* and as I sauntered about the sands in those days of convalescence, and snatched bits of *Punch* whenever the humour took me, I discovered for the first time what the ministry of nonsense means. Mr. G. K. Chesterton, in one of his frolicsome moods, declared the other day that the discovery of nonsense was the most notable discovery of the Victorian era. He was not far out. That stirring age was pre-eminently an age of daring ingenuity and masterly manufacture; but Mr. Chesterton thinks that the finest of all its innumerable pro-

ductions was the making of good jokes. All that was really illustrious in the literature of that fruitful period emanated, he believes, from the awakening of an altogether fresh and altogether delightful sense of exquisite humour. An entirely new vein was exploited; and the Englishman of those great days excelled himself, in Mr. Chesterton's judgement, as a humorist, and one of the best humorists in Europe. A sly twinkle haunted the eye of the typical Victorian, and a hearty peal of laughter was never far away.

The humorist is beset by two opposite temptations, the temptation to buffoonery and the temptation to cynicism; and it is to the honour of the men who inaugurated the new style half a century ago that, speaking generally, they contrived to steer skilfully between the rocks of Scylla on the one hand and the whirlpool of Charybdis on the other. The pre-Victorian critics were fond of extolling Addison as the beau ideal whose humour should be regarded as the model of the younger writers; and it is difficult to quarrel with their choice. Macaulay contrasts Addison with Voltaire on the one hand and with Swift on the other. The humour of Swift, he points out, was marked by a severity which gradually hardened and darkened into misanthropy. The humour of Voltaire, on the other hand, was constantly disfigured by irreverence.

"The mirth of Swift," he says, "is the mirth of Mephistopheles; the mirth of Voltaire is the mirth of Puck." Against this dark background, the historian shows us the pure, clean, wholesome mirth of Addison, "a mirth consistent with tender compassion for all that is frail, and with profound reverence for all that is sublime." But whilst the merriment of Addison is certainly innocent of the ugly blemishes that disfigure the jests of Voltaire, and of the satire that embittered the witticisms of Swift, we all feel that it cuts a very sorry figure when compared with those spacious realms of magnificent nonsense which the littérateurs of a century later so bravely discovered and so thoroughly explored. The flickering mirth of the Georgian authors seems scarcely more worthy of comparison with the rich creations of the Victorian school than does the humour that Heinrich Heine saluted in his kittens. There is nothing in the older literature that can hold its own against the magnificent gusto of Mr. Pickwick, the excruciating absurdities of the March Hare, the rollicking drolleries of Pooh-Bah, or the polished subtleties which, for so many years, have made famous Mr. Punch's Wednesday dinner-table—the old mahogany tree in Bouverie Street. Every man whose appreciation of the ludicrous enables him to catch the spirit of these irresistible concep-

tions will gratefully acknowledge that the nonsense discovered by the great Victorian humorists was in every way worthy of the distinguished genius engaged in the adventure.

One of the very choicest spirits that I ever met was a man who knew how to turn a ministry of nonsense to the highest possible ends. I am thinking of the Rev. J. J. Doke, who died, a year or two ago, in the course of an exploratory journey through Rhodesia. He officiated at my wedding; and he and I worked together for some years in New Zealand, understanding each other pretty thoroughly. I shall never forget the triumphs that he achieved by his faculty for fun. I never knew a man in whom holiness and humour blended as they did in him. I have known many good men who loved to laugh; but the goodness and the laughter seemed somehow to dwell in separate compartments of their being. When they were laughing you temporarily forgot their devoutness; and when they were praying you forgot their peals of merriment. But with Mr. Doke it was quite otherwise. The ingredients, both of his humour and of his piety, were such that they blended most perfectly, and you could never tell where the one ended and the other began.

And this remarkable trait was used by Mr. Doke for all it was worth. It happened that his

sojourn in New Zealand synchronized with a trying period of storm and stress in the history of our Missionary Society. It was a most grave and anxious time for all of us, and I shall never forget how, time after time, his tactful wit saved most delicate and threatening situations. Mr. Chesterton says that the discovery of nonsense was the greatest revelation of the nineteenth century. That being so, Mr. Doke deserves to be ranked as one of our greatest discoverers, for he saw, as few men saw, the inestimable value of that magic and potent force. I can recall occasions when we had been sitting for hours, anxiously discussing a depressing and apparently impossible situation, until our patience was exhausted and our nerves unstrung. Out of sheer weariness and vexation we might easily have committed any sort of indiscretion. But over there in the corner sits Mr. Doke. I can see him now. He is taking out his pencil. In a moment or two he has finished his work. With a few deft strokes he has struck off an irresistibly comical cartoon, caricaturing some ridiculous phase in the trying affair, and focusing, in the drollest possible way, the humorous side of the knotty question. The cartoon is handed round, and we laugh immoderately over the product of Mr. Doke's captivating genius. A new atmosphere straightway envelopes the debate. The interrup-

tion is as refreshing as an hour's sleep or a delicious cup of tea. It is as though a window has been opened in a stuffy room, and the place has suddenly been filled with fresh and perfume-laden air. We settle down to work again with clearer brains, cheerier hearts, and sweeter tempers.

This was in committee; but he waved the same magic wand over our assembly. I remember a very painful debate that took place in those trying days. The question was as to whether or not certain letters ought ever to have been written. Some telling speeches had been made, and feeling was running very high. At length the time for voting arrived, and it looked as though the assembly would not only censure its officers, but perhaps precipitate a cleavage that many years would scarcely heal. The chairman rose to put the motion. The atmosphere was distinctly electrical and charged with tensest feeling. In the nick of time, Mr. Doke cried "Mr. President," and came striding down the aisle. I can see him now as he turned to address us. "Mr. President," he said, "is it not possible that *both* sides are right? Is it not possible that we are each reading into these troublesome letters our own strong feeling? Let me tell you a story. Once upon a time a man had two children, a boy and a girl. In course of time, the boy became refrac-

tory and ran away from home. He was not heard of again for many years. The girl remained at her father's side, and was his constant stay and comforter. Just, however, as the old man had given up all hope of again hearing from his son, a letter arrived. But neither father nor daughter had been to school, and they could not read it. 'Let us take it down to the butcher, father!' the daughter suggested. 'He can read, and he will tell us what Tom says.' To the butcher they accordingly hastened. Now the butcher was a gruff, sour, surly old man, and they were unfortunate enough to find him in one of his nastiest moods. He tore open the letter with a grunt, and read, in a snappy, churlish voice—'Dear father, I'm very ill; send me some money. Yours, Tom.' 'The rascal!' the old man exclaimed indignantly, 'he only wants my money. He shan't have a single penny!' They turned away sorrowfully, and set off towards home. But on the way another thought visited the daughter. 'Father,' she said, 'what do you say to going to the baker? The butcher may have made a mistake. The baker can read, too; and he is a kind, Christian man. Let us go to him!' And to the baker's they went. Now the baker was a genial, gracious soul, with a voice tremulous with feeling and resonant with sympathy. He gently took the letter from its envelope and read: '*Dear*

father, I'm *very* ill; send me some money.—*Yours,* Tom.' 'The poor boy,' the old man cried, brushing away a tear. 'How much can we send him?'"

The whole assembly was in the best of good humour at once. The application was obvious. It was as though the lowering thundercloud had broken in refreshing summer rain. The air was cleared, and the flowers were exhaling their choicest fragrance in the sunshine that followed the storm. Mr. Doke's beautiful personality had cast its spell over us all. We felt that we wanted an interval in which to shake hands with each other. He made a suggestion in closing that would obviate all risk of further complications. Both sides snatched at it eagerly; and the painful episode closed with expressions of the most cordial goodwill.

Here, then, we have the ministry of nonsense; and a very sacred and beautiful ministry it is. What tragedies might have been spared if only nonsense had been discovered a few centuries earlier! Who can review the strifes and squabbles of centuries gone by without deploring the utter lack of humour which so often characterized the angry combatants. "Isn't it desperately comical," George Gissing makes one of his characters to exclaim, "that one human being can hate and revile another because they think differ-

ently about the origin of the universe?" Soame Jenyns, a quaint old writer of two centuries back, gravely affirmed that a fine sense of humour is one of the chief delights of the seraphim and of just men made perfect. He writes as though he knew what he was talking about, and I am in no mood to contradict him. "Is there humour in the divine mind?" asked one of his students of old Rabbi Duncan one day. "It's true and it's no true!" answered the canny old Scotsman. I wish that Heinrich Heine could have been there. "How can we think that God has no humour when He made kittens?" Heine asks. I should like to have seen the old Rabbi fencing with that conundrum. To be sure, the world would be a glum old place if all the laughter died out of it; and how did the laughter get into it if God did not put it there? That's what I should like to know.

"I love my God as He loves me—
Merrily.
I feel His kisses in the breeze,
And so I carve His name on trees—
Why not?
Ten thousand years misunderstood
He needs my laughter in the wood
A lot."

Yes, I think that old Soame Jenyns must be right, and that there must be some fondness of fun among the angels.

VI

THE GRIN

Of all Alice's "Adventures in Wonderland," it always seems to me that her adventure with the Cheshire Cat was by far the most illuminating and significant. The March Hare is good, and the Mad Hatter is better, but the Cheshire Cat is best of all. The cat was sitting on the bough of a tree not far from her, when Alice was first made aware, with a start, of its existence. "The cat only grinned when it saw Alice. It looked good-natured, she thought; still it had long claws and a great many teeth, so she felt that it ought to be treated with respect." Alice addressed the cat, and was pleased to see that it "only grinned a little wider." The extraordinary thing about the cat, however, was not the suddenness of its appearance, but the gradual way in which it vanished. It went and came again several times.

"I wish," said Alice, "you wouldn't keep appearing and vanishing so suddenly; you make one quite giddy."

"All right," said the cat, and this time it vanished quite slowly, beginning with the end of the tail, and ending with the grin, which remained some time after the rest of it had gone.

"Well, I've often seen a cat without a grin," thought Alice; "but a grin without a cat! It's the most curious thing I ever saw in my life!"

I

Poor little Alice! I daresay that there was a time in my own life when, in my childish simplicity, I thought that the grin was part and parcel of the cat, and that you had simply to make an end of the cat in order to get rid of the grin. If there was such a time, it was long, long ago, and I must have laid such a fantastic notion aside with my faith in fairies and elves. For everybody who has reached the years of maturity and reality has discovered that it is the easiest thing in the world to get rid of the cat. A bucket of water or sixpennyworth of poison will make an end of its nine lives all at once. But the grin! You may sink your cat into the unfathomable depths of the ocean, or administer to it the most powerful poison that the Pharmaceutical Societies of the world, gathered in solemn conclave, can prescribe, but you will not kill the grin. Alice discovered, as we have all discovered sooner or later, that the grin always survives the cat. Anybody who has ever tried to drown a cat knows perfectly well that, even as you leave the scene of the tragedy, feeling as guilty and as wretched as the vilest felon who was ever hanged

at Newgate, the cat grins at you from the bough of every tree and the top of every wall. Lewis Carroll's picture of little Alice marvelling at the grin still left in the tree after the cat had gone is one of the most touching and satisfying delineations of childish simplicity in the language.

II

In point of fact, this matter of the cat and the grin has been very prominent of late. Perhaps no philosopher has ever stirred the thought of the world quite so deeply as has Henri Bergson. Bergson's philosophy is a philosophy of movement. And the whole controversy that has raged around his person and work has concerned itself with the question as to whether you can have a movement apart from an object moving. "Is it possible," as Mr. H. W. Carr asks, "to imagine that movement is itself reality, that it can subsist by itself, and that the things that move are not prior to, but productions of, the movement? This difficulty goes to the very heart of the problem of philosophy." Here, then, we have the very latest word of the most advanced academies reduced to this question—Can you have movement apart from a thing moving? Which, I aver, is simply another way of asking, Can you have a grin apart from a cat? And as I have already committed myself to the philosophy of Lewis

Carroll, I am bound as an act of intellectual decency and consistency, to ally myself with Professor Bergson. I am not quite sure that Henri Bergson and Lewis Carroll have ever been introduced, and I feel that I owe them some sort of apology for jumbling up *Alice in Wonderland* and *L'Evolution Créatrice* in this unceremonious way. But the two gentlemen are each in excellent company and will agree admirably. For, of course, as Bergson teaches, you can have pure movement apart from a thing moving. And—equally, of course—you can have a grin left in the tree after the cat has gone. But it is time that we emerged from the nebulous mists of the abstract, and began to examine the illustrative phenomena. Very well, let us go out.

III

I remember once being in serious trouble through having quite innocently grieved a friend whose confidence I highly valued. It was purely an accident. A thing had happened that was obviously ambiguous and capable of several interpretations. The most unhappy construction was put upon it, and the matter soon assumed an exaggerated importance. There were two courses open to me: I could go to my friend pleading my innocence and vindicating my position. I knew, however, that his mind was so

poisoned that he could not be expected to accept my assurance without discussion, and discussion would prove tedious and fruitless. I therefore resolved upon the other course. I went to him and confessed that I had moved without sufficiently calculating the possible construction that might be placed upon my action, and I craved his forgiveness.

"Yes," he answered, "I forgive you!" Thus vanished the cat.

"But," he added, "we can never be the same again!" Thus lingered the grin.

IV

Now forgiveness is one of the highest arts of life. I had almost said that it is the highest art of life. It is the highest because it is the divinest. It is a great thing to be a really good forgiver. And the difference between a good forgiver and a poor forgiver is simply this: A good forgiver takes care that the grin vanishes with the cat. Here are a couple of illustrative stories, selected from two great biographies, one of a poor forgiver, and one of a good forgiver. The first is from Coke and Moore's *Life of Wesley*. On Wesley's voyage to America, he heard one day an unusual noise in the cabin of General Oglethorpe, the Governor of Georgia. Wesley stepped in to inquire the cause. It turned out that Grimaldi,

the Governor's servant, had devoured the entire stock of the great man's favourite wine. "But I will be revenged!" cried the Governor. "I have ordered him to be tied hand and foot, and to be carried to the man-of-war that sails with us. For, you know, Mr. Wesley, I never forgive!" "In that case, sir," replied Wesley, "I hope you never sin!" The General was quite confounded at the reproof; and putting his hand into his pocket, took out a bunch of keys, which he threw at Grimaldi, saying, "There, villain, take my keys, and behave better for the future!" In this flinging of keys at the unhappy sinner, and in this "There, villain," we feel, as I felt in the case of my friend, that, although the cat had vanished, the grin was still there. Oglethorpe was but a poor forgiver.

V

Now, side by side with this, and by way of contrast, let me set an incident from the life of Gladstone. Gladstone was at the time Chancellor of the Exchequer. He sent down to the Treasury office one day for a sheaf of statistics on which he based his budget proposals. Now it happened that, in compiling the statistics, the clerk had made a mistake that vitally affected the entire situation. The blunder was only discovered after Mr. Gladstone had elaborated his proposal and made his budget

speech in the House of Commons. The papers immediately exposed the fallacy, and for a moment the Chancellor was overwhelmed with embarrassment. He was made to appear ridiculous before the entire nation. He sent down to the Treasury for the clerk to come to him at once. The clerk duly arrived, trembling with apprehension, and expecting instant dismissal. He began to stammer out his apologies, and his entreaty for forgiveness. Mr. Gladstone stopped him. "I sent for you," he said, "because I could imagine the torture of your feelings. You have been for many years dealing with the bewildering intricacies of the national accounts, and you have done your work with such conscientious exactness that this is your first mistake. It was because of your splendid record that I did not trouble to verify your calculations. I have sent for you to compliment you on that record and to set you at your ease." The cat had vanished from the tree, and had left not the shadow of a grin behind. If the New Testament means anything, it means that a man who can forgive with such gallantry and chivalry is a very great Christian indeed.

VI

I am not at all sure that our great Church Courts—our Synods and Assemblies and Con-

gresses—will not have to take this matter of the lingering grin into serious consideration. It is good and pleasant, as the Psalmist said, to see brethren dwelling together in unity. But when I see a basis of organic union being drafted by bodies that once quarrelled like Kilkenny cats, I am nervous lest, with the formal extinction of the cat, some ghostly wraith of a grin should still linger. One of the most stinging passages in Gibbon's *Decline and Fall* is that in which he tells how, at the Synod of Florence, the Greek and Latin Churches embraced, subscribed, and united. But the grin lingered. A spectral spirit of mutual suspicion haunted their intercourse. "These signs of friendship," says Gibbon, "were perfidious or fruitless; and the baseless fabric of the union vanished like a dream." Macaulay has a passage in his History dealing with a similar experience in England in 1688. The union of Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists was, he says, like a golden age between two iron ages. And, commenting on the tying and cutting of these bonds of unity, Macaulay says that "it must be remembered that, though concord is in itself better than discord, discord may indicate a better state of things than is indicated by concord." That is to say, if I understand the historian rightly, that it is even better to have the Cheshire Cat itself than to get

rid of the cat and find the grin still smirking and leering on the bough.

VII

There is just one other word of which this fantastic spectre reminds me. There are few things more pitiful than the lingering of the ghostly shadow after the actual substance has vanished. I have known Christian workers to give up working, and givers to give up giving, and teachers to give up teaching, and preachers to give up preaching. And this is bad enough. But it does not sound the lowest depth of spiritual squalor. The worst tragedy of all occurs when the worker goes on working, and the giver goes on giving, and the teacher goes on teaching, and the preacher goes on preaching, after the faith and rapture that first prompted these gracious activities have fled. The first love is lost; the old enthusiasm is dissipated; and the mocking shadow alone remains. Ichabod is stamped upon the soul; but that soul still moves habitually and mechanically through its accustomed round. The life itself has disappeared; yet the grin still haunts the changed but familiar scene.

VII

MY TOBACCO

My friend Anderson is a great smoker. He is a minister, and I have once or twice heard some of his own people express the wish that he were a little less ardently devoted to his pipe. It is not for me either to excuse or to condemn him. Our friendship has lasted now through a good many years; I have therefore had the opportunity of observing him pretty closely; I have myself never smoked a pipe in my life; yet I have often felt that in some respects he has the advantage of me. Let a couple of examples suffice. Both incidents occurred last evening.

I rose from tea at half-past six. I had had a heavy and trying day. The only engagement that lay before me was an appointment here at the house at eight o'clock. Now I felt that, if I were wise, I should take things easily until then. I sauntered into the study in a haphazard kind of a way; and in five minutes found myself engrossed in a variety of matters that needed attention.

"Come, now," I said to myself, "this won't do! You said you were going to rest for half an hour;

and here you are, at it as hard as ever! Go out on to the verandah!"

To the verandah I accordingly went, taking with me a book. But why a book? Why not let everything go for a few minutes? Stroll up and down bareheaded; watch the clouds or the people; and do nothing! I tried it, but it was hard work. Yet Anderson would have found it the easiest thing in the world. He would have gone out to the verandah, lit his pipe, put his hands in his pockets, enjoyed feeling the breeze playing with his hair, and would have walked up and down as happy as a king. So much for the first of my promised examples. Now for the second.

Eight o'clock arrived. My friend came up the front steps just as the clock was striking. He told me beforehand that he wished to discuss with me a matter of some delicacy. It was too chilly by this time to remain on the verandah. I lit the gas in the dining-room, and pointed him to an arm-chair. I seated myself in the chair opposite him. So far all had gone perfectly well. But now the trouble began. We found ourselves staring awkwardly at each other. There was a certain stiffness in the situation that it was difficult to overcome. To begin by talking about the weather would have been an affectation, for he knew that I was absorbed by curiosity as to the subject that had brought him. And I, in my

turn, knew that that subject—whatever it was—engrossed all his thought. To sit there facing each other seemed absurd; yet to plunge into the matter in hand before he had well got his breath would have appeared artificial and abrupt. There is a psychological moment for the commencement of a conversation. In this case, it had not come. And so an awkward pause ensued. I looked at him in a stand-and-deliver kind of a way, whilst he, I could see, was revolving the troublesome subject in his mind and wondering how best to approach it. Now a pair of smokers would have managed things much more pleasantly. They would have lit their pipes and puffed away, and neither would have cared how long the other took before he spoke. I should have been saved from appearing unduly inquisitive, and he would have felt under no obligation to break the silence until he was perfectly ready.

I was glancing yesterday through the *Life* of Viscount Wolverhampton—better known as Sir Henry Fowler. His daughter tells us, in the course of this fine biography, that Sir Henry was an inordinate devourer of newspapers. And when criticized for his prodigious appetite for magazines and periodicals, he, a non-smoker, replied, "They are *my tobacco!*" It was this suggestive phrase that drove me to my desk. If a man does not smoke, he must carefully make

other arrangements for developing the graces to which a pipe will help a smoker. Unless I can cultivate by some other means that perfect restfulness, that fine poise of spirit, which I so admire in Anderson, I must confess myself defeated. He has the better of me. In my case, Sir Henry Fowler's newspapers will not exactly fill the bill; but they will serve as a starting-point. How are we to enjoy a smoker's advantages, and cultivate a smoker's graces, without recourse to tobacco? That is the question.

There are moments when it is absolutely necessary that a man should say nothing and do nothing. It is in those crucial moments that the non-smoker finds himself at a disadvantage. He is fidgety and restless; impatient for action, eager for the time to come at which he can profitably work or speak. The smoker gets over the difficulty without any such agony of nervous fretfulness. Old Izaak Walton is a case in point. In instructing us as to the best way of catching bream, he says that, at about four o'clock in the afternoon, we must repair to the bank of the stream, and, as soon as we come to the waterside, must cast in one-half of our ground-bait and stand off. "Then, whilst the fish are gathering together, for they will most certainly come for their supper, *you may take a pipe of tobacco;* and then, in with your three rods!" Now why that

pipe of tobacco? There is a certain interval to be filled in; a period in which it would be disastrous to say anything or do anything. It is just such a period as my friend and I spent in the arm-chairs—silently, awkwardly facing each other. The most convinced anti-tobacconist will scarcely deny that here again—whilst the fish are gathering round the ground-bait—the smoker has the best of us. At that point Anderson would put me to shame. It is more easy for him to patiently await the time to whip in the rods than it is for me. All this I frankly confess, and any honest non-smoker will agree with me.

Now half the art of life lies in being able on occasions to do nothing—and to do it easily. Newman found this grace so difficult of acquirement that he gave it up as a bad job. "He filled up," says Mozley, "his whole time, taxed his whole strength, and occupied his whole future. He reduced retrospection to a very narrow compass, to a few faces, to flowers on a bank or a wall, to a fragrance or a sound. He never took solitary walks if he could help it. He would not be alone and left to his own thoughts when he was neither studying nor writing nor praying." Darwin was as bad. His one defect was an utter incapacity for idleness. "I wish," writes his wife, "I wish he could *smoke a pipe* or ruminate like a cow." There is such a thing as a genius

for repose. It is a great thing for a man to be the captain of his soul; to have every faculty under command; and to be able to drop anchor and be perfectly at ease when nothing is to be gained by continued activity.

Here, then, is the problem—how to be still? I have confessed that there are moments when I envy my friend Anderson with his pipe. It strikes me as being a fine thing, a very fine thing, to be able to do nothing so naturally. I would give half my goods and chattels to be able to wait under the willows, for the bream to come round the ground-bait, with the perfect self-possession of old Izaak Walton. And I would give more than half to be able to sit in the arm-chair in easy, restful silence, never breaking that silence until the exact moment had arrived. But I confess that it is not in me.

Yet, I confess, too, that, although I envy the smoker, I am still a non-smoker. I once learned swimming. In the baths I saw boys with bladders, belts, and all kinds of similar contrivances. I envied them their ability to keep afloat. Turning to my swimming-master, I said:

"Lend me a belt like that, and I shall soon learn to swim."

"If you once use a belt like that, you will never learn to swim," he replied firmly. I stood corrected.

The application is obvious. I wish to swim; but it must be without belts and bladders. I wish to walk; but not with crutches. I wish my child to count; but I would not have him always count with beads. I shall never be satisfied until I can possess my soul in perfect poise and restfulness; until I can do nothing, and do it well, and do it easily; and so ambitious am I that I aspire to do it one day without any adventitious aids. A woman can be at her ease—if you pass her her knitting. A man can be still—if you give him his pipe. But was the soul made to rest only by means of such adventitious aids? Mr. M. J. Savage has sung to us of the man who has learned to manage without them:

"I haste no more.
At dawn or when the day is done,
The sun comes calmly to his place:
I've learned the lesson of the sun.

"I haste no more.
For Spring and Autumn earth decrees
The leaves shall bud, the leaves shall fall:
I've learned the lesson of the trees.

"I haste no more.
At flood or ebb as it may be,
The ocean answers to the moon:
I've learned the lesson of the sea.

"I haste no more.
Whate'er, whoe'er is mine—these must
On God's ways meet me in God's time:
I've learned the lesson, and I trust."

To-day I look on Anderson with his pipe as I once looked at the "little wanton boys that swim on bladders," and it may be that, as long as I live, he will have the laugh at me. Yet, after all, men learned to do nothing, and to do it well, long before Sir Francis Drake and Sir Walter Raleigh brought the fragrant weed from the golden West; and I am therefore not quite without hope that I shall yet be able to possess my soul beneath the willows, untortured by a single twinge of restlessness or impatience, until the ground-bait has attracted a perfect shoal of bream. When that day comes, I shall laugh at Anderson and his pipe.

VIII

THE POWDER MAGAZINE

I

I HAVE a special fondness for explosive people. I can never persuade myself that dynamite got into the world by accident. I intolerantly scout the theory that the devil built all the volcanoes, and that his minions feed their furious fires. I have admired an indescribable grandeur in the hurricane. I have felt the cyclone to be splendid, and the tornado to be next door to sublimity. Even the earthquake has a glory of its own. And how a thunderstorm clears the air! How deliciously sweet my garden smells when the riven clouds have passed, and the glittering drops are still clinging like pendant gems to the drooping petals and the bright green leaves! And, in the same way, I have discovered something terribly sublime in those stormy elements that sweep the realm within.

There was a time when my eyes were closed to this side of the glory of God's world. I used to think it a dreadful thing for Paul to be cross with Barnabas. I thought it shocking if Bar-

nabas spoke sharply to Paul. For Barnabas was "a good man and full of the Holy Ghost." And Paul was "a good man and full of the Holy Ghost." And I thought that so lovely and tranquil a little world had no room for dynamite. Till, one day, a thing happened that made me feel as though a volcano had burst into eruption at my feet! I was thunder-struck! The circumstances are briefly told. Paul and Barnabas had just completed one adventurous, triumphant, and historic campaign together. Together they had crossed the tumbling seas in crazy little vessels that would scarcely now be permitted to cruise about a river. Together they had trudged, singing as they went, along the lonely forest trail through the lowlands of Pamphylia. Together they had climbed the great pass over the mountains of Pisidia. Together they had felt the exhilaration of the heights as they surveyed, shading their eyes with their hands, the lands that they had come to conquer. Together, at the risk of their lives, they had forded streams in full tumultuous flood; together they had known hunger and thirst; together they had shared unspeakable hardships; together they had faced the most terrible privations. Together they had been deified one day, and together they had been stoned the next. Together they had made known the love of Christ in the great capitals; together

they had rejoiced over their converts; and then, together, they had made that never-to-be-forgotten return journey. I have often tried to imagine their emotions, as, on the homeward way, they came in sight of one city after another that they had visited in coming. In coming, those cities were heathen capitals and nothing more. In returning, there were churches there and fond familiar faces! And what meetings those must have been in each city when the members again welcomed Paul and Barnabas; when the two scarred heroes told the thrilling tale of their experiences elsewhere; and when, in each church, ministers and officers were appointed! And, leaving a chain of thoroughly organized churches behind them across the land, as a ship leaves her foaming wake across the waters, the two valiant and dauntless companions returned home. How all this had welded these two noble souls together! They are knit, each to each, like the souls of David and Jonathan!

And now a second campaign is suggested. Barnabas proposes that they should take with them Mark. Mark, who was the nephew of Barnabas, had started with them on their former journey; but, at the first brush of persecution, he had hastily scampered home. Paul instantly vetoes the proposal. He will not hear of it. He will not have a coward at any price. His soul loathes

a traitor. Barnabas insists, but Paul remains adamant. "And the contention was so sharp between them that they departed asunder the one from the other," and, probably, never met again. If I had not been actually present and witnessed this amazing explosion with my own eyes, I fancy my faith would have staggered. As it is, the surprising spectacle only taught me that God has left room for dynamite in a world like this; and, much as I admired both Paul and Barnabas before the outburst, I loved them still more when the storm was overpast.

II

I have said that I saw this astonishing outburst with my own eyes. That is so, or at least so I fancied. For it seemed to me that I was honoured with a seat on a committee of which both Paul and Barnabas were valued and revered members. We all loved them, and treasured every gracious word that fell from their lips. For "Barnabas was a good man and full of the Holy Ghost." And "Paul was a good man and full of the Holy Ghost." Now Mark had applied to the committee for engagement as a missionary. And Barnabas rose to move his appointment. I shall never forget the charm and grace with which he did it. I could see at a glance that the good man was speaking under deep feeling. His

voice reflected his strong emotion. He reminded us that Mark was his relative, and he felt a certain heavy responsibility for his nephew's spiritual well-being. He trembled, he said, lest he should be condemned as one who risked his life for the heathen over the seas, but who displayed no serious solicitude concerning his own kith and kin. He had wept in secret over his young kinsman's former treachery. But it had made him the more eager to win his soul in spite of everything. He was alarmed lest the rejection of his relative should lead to his utter humiliation, total exclusion, and final loss. He admitted with shame and grief all that could be alleged against him. He had been weighed in the balances and found wanting. He had turned his back in the hour of peril. But what of that? Had we not all our faults and failures? I remember that, as he said this, Barnabas glanced round the councilrable, and looked inquiringly into each face. There was moisture in his own bright eyes, and each man hung his head beneath that searching glance.

And then, he went on, surely there was something admirable in Mark's original venture. He had nothing to gain by going. It was his enthusiasm for the cause of Christ that prompted him to go. It proved that his heart was in the right place. And the very fact that he was anxious to

set out again, with a full knowledge of the perils before him, proved indisputably that he had sincerely repented of his earlier unfaithfulness, and was eager for an opportunity of redeeming his name from contempt. How could we ourselves hope for forgiveness unless we were prepared to show mercy in a case like this? Once more those searchlights swept the faces round the table. And then, with wonderful tenderness, Barnabas reminded us of the bruised reed that must not be broken and of the smoking flax that must not be quenched. And, in the name of Him who, after His resurrection, found a special place for Peter, the disciple who had thrice denied his Lord, Barnabas implored us to favour his nephew's application. There was a hush in the room when the gracious speech was finished. We all felt that Barnabas was a good man and full of the Holy Ghost.

III

Then Paul rose. One could see at a glance that his whole soul rebelled against having to oppose the partner of so many providential escapes, the comrade of so many gallant fights. The affection of these two for each other was very beautiful. Paul admitted frankly that he had been deeply touched by the gracious words that had fallen from the lips of Barnabas. His

heart leaped up to greet every one of those appeals. Each argument met with its echo and response in every fibre of his being. For old friendship's sake he would dearly like to accede to the request of Barnabas. Was it not through the influence of Barnabas, and in face of strong opposition, that he himself was admitted to the sacred service? And because Mark was his old friend's nephew he would especially wish to entertain the proposal. But we were gathered together, he reminded us, in the sacred interests of the kingdom of Christ. And for the sake of the honour of that kingdom we must be prepared to set aside considerations of friendship, and even to ignore the tender claims of kinship. The friendship of Barnabas was one of earth's most precious treasures; but he could not allow even that to influence him in a matter in which he felt that the integrity of the cause of Christ was at stake. The relatives of Barnabas were as dear to him as his own kith and kin; but there were higher considerations than domestic considerations. Mark had once—perhaps twice—proved himself unequal to the claims of this perilous undertaking. He might render excellent and valuable service in some other capacity. But for this particular enterprise, which required, as well as a warm heart, a cool head and a steady nerve, Mark was clearly unfitted. He became

terror-stricken in the hour of danger. They could not afford to run such risks. A defection in their own party gave the enemy cause to blaspheme. It exposed them to ridicule and contempt. The heathen cried out that these men were prepared to follow Christ so long as Christ never went near a cross. The Jews, who had themselves suffered for their faith, laughed at a new doctrine from which its very teachers might be scared and intimidated. And the young converts would find it immensely more difficult to endure persecution for the gospel's sake if they beheld one of the missionaries turn his back in the hour of peril. He had long ago forgiven Mark, he said, for his former failure. Indeed, he scarcely recognized any need for forgiveness. He felt sorry for his young friend at the time, and he felt sorry for him still. Mark was a gentle spirit, not made for riots and tumults; and, in the shock of opposition, he was easily frightened. His love for Christ, and his zeal for service, were very admirable; and they all loved him for his simplicity and sincerity and enthusiasm. But, knowing his peculiar frailty, they must not expose either him or the cause to needless risk. The welfare of Mark, and the reputation of the Cross, were very dear to him; and he would on no account whatever agree to submit the delicate soul of Mark to a strain that it had already

proved itself unable to bear, or the gospel to an unnecessary risk of being brought into disfavour and contempt. He implored the committee to deal wisely and considerately with the subtle and delicate and complex character of his young friend, and to prize above everything else the honour of the gospel. Personally he was quite determined that it would be a wicked and unjust and unkind thing to expose the soul of Mark to such imminent peril, and the Cross of Christ to such grave risk of further scandal. He would on no account take Mark. The speech was so tempered with tenderness, as well as with firmness and wisdom, that it created a profound impression. We all felt that Paul was a good man and full of the Holy Ghost.

IV

Neither would yield. How could they? Each had heard a voice that was higher and more imperative than the voice of sentiment or of friendship. It is ridiculous to say that they should have "made it up" for old sake's sake, or for the gospel's sake, or for any other sake. Barnabas believed, in the very soul of him, that it would be wrong to leave Mark behind. And Paul believed, in the very soul of him, that it would be wrong to take Mark with them. You cannot bridge a gulf like that. Each tried to convince

the other. The contention became sharp but futile. And they parted. And I, for one, honour them. They could not, as "good men and full of the Holy Ghost," have done anything else. I do not pretend to understand why God has made room in the world for earthquakes and volcanoes. I see them tear up the valleys and hurl down the mountains; and I stand bewildered and astonished. But there they are! I do not pretend to understand these other explosive forces. But there they are! And I, for one, love both Paul and Barnabas the more that they will neither of them sacrifice, even for friendship's sweet sake, the interests of the cause of Christ.

In my New Zealand days I knew two men, almost aged. I have told the story in detail in *Mushrooms on the Moor*. These two men had been bosom friends. Time after time, year after year, they had walked up to the house of God in company. In the days of grey hairs they came to differ on important religious questions, and could no longer conscientiously worship beneath the same roof. They met; they tried to discuss the debateable doctrine; but their hearts were too full. Side by side they walked for miles along lonely roads on a clear, frosty, moonlight night, in the hope that presently a discussion would be possible. I walked in reverent silence some distance ahead of them. But speech never

came. Grief had completely paralysed the vocal powers, and the eyes were streaming with another eloquence. They wrung each other's hands at length, and parted without even a "Good-night." They still differ; they still occasionally meet; they still love. They even admire each other for being willing to sacrifice old fellowship for conscience sake. There is something here with which the more flippant advocates of church union do not reckon. Paul and Barnabas are good men, both of them, and full of the Holy Ghost. But they cannot agree. Face to face, the contention becomes very sharp. They wisely part. As I say, I do not pretend to understand why God left so many explosive forces lying about His world; but there they are!

V

It all turned out wonderfully well, as it was bound to do. Barnabas, whatever became of him, made a hero of Mark. He became perfectly lion-hearted. "Bring Mark with thee," wrote Paul to Timothy, when he himself was awaiting his martyr-death at Rome. "Bring Mark with thee, for he is profitable to me for my ministry." And I like to think that when Peter felt that the time had come to put on permanent record the holy memories of earlier Galilean days, he employed Mark to pen the precious pamphlet for him.

Peter and Mark understood each other. And as they worked together on that second "gospel," they had many a tearful talk of the way in which, long before, they had each played the coward's part, and had each been greatly forgiven and graciously restored. To those of us who look up to Paul and Barnabas as to a terrific height above us, it is splendid to know that there is room for Peter and for Mark in the heart that loves and in the service that ennobles.

IX

THE BENEDICTION

It is not often that a minister sits among his people listening to the voice of another. That rare privilege fell to my lot last Sunday; and how thoroughly I enjoyed it my friends know very well. The hymns, the prayers, the sermon —each part of the service in its turn—seemed wonderfully refreshing and uplifting; and the Benediction seemed the climax of the whole. The feeling may have arisen from that sweet sadness which invariably enfolds the last moments of all earthly pleasures; or it may have been that there really is a grandeur in those stately cadences that had never before so powerfully impressed me. However that may be, I shall never forget that hushed and solemn moment in which, the congregation standing with bowed heads, the minister pronounced those sublime simplicities, those simple sublimities. Like the breath of heaven there fell upon us those ancient but wealthy words:

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.

A moment's stillness followed; and then we quietly turned homewards; but, whichever way we went, the tender grace of that beauteous benediction seemed to follow and enfold us.

I

I suppose that the simple words derive their grandeur from the fact that they state, with the grace of the poet rather than with the technique of the theologian, the mystery of the Trinity. It is an awful theme, and suited only to just such a setting. There are things which, like the song of the lark and the perfume of the violet, do not lend themselves to definition. When I let my mind play about that stupendous thought which is embalmed in the phraseology of the Benediction, I fancy that my modest ventures in photography have given me a hint or two towards its comprehension. For my camera has taught me that there are three ways of looking at everything. They are—

1. The Way of my Right Eye.
2. The Way of my Left Eye.
3. The Way of my Camera.

That the way of the right eye differs from the way of the left eye can be demonstrated by the simple process of closing each of the eyes in turn, and examining the object first with the one eye only and then with the other eye only. Each sees

the thing from its own angle. The camera cannot adjust itself to both eyes, so it effects a compromise. Its single lens sees things as they would appear to me if I had but one eye, and that one eye in the middle of my forehead. But, obviously, no one of these three ways is, in itself, the correct way of looking at a thing. As I reflect thus, along comes my more fortunate friend with a stereoscopic camera. He takes, not one view which is a compromise between my right eye's view and my left eye's view, but two views—the view of the object as my right eye sees it and the view of the object as my left eye sees it. Then he places the two views behind glasses, which, applied to my two eyes, blend the two into one, just as my eyes are accustomed automatically to do. The result is that the picture is real and vivid and lifelike. I tried, once upon a day, to think of God the Father, and to think of God the Son, and to think of God the Holy Spirit. But I became hopelessly confused. And then I heard the voice of Jesus declare that "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father," and I understood that in the person of Jesus I have the stereoscopic view of God.

II

And then, as I walked home from church, with the music of the Benediction ringing in my ears,

it seemed like a declaration that all the treasure of heaven is for each mortal on earth. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, *be with you all.*" The best things are indivisible. If you divide *material* treasure between a thousand people, each has a thousandth part; but if you divide the *heavenly* treasure between a thousand people, each has the whole. I am very fond of that fine passage in the *Compleat Angler* in which the gentle author tells of the delight that he found in thousands of things that did not strictly belong to him. The actual owner of the estate on which he fished was worried to death by vexatious disputes and threatened litigation; but, as for Izaak, he was in the seventh heaven. He strolled down through the leafy woods and shady groves; he crossed the fragrant meadows in which he saw a tousle-haired schoolboy gathering lilies and a rosy-cheeked lassie with an armful of cowslips; he cast his line into the sparkling stream and saw the great silvery trout flash through the laughing waters; and he was in bliss without alloy. "As I sat thus," he says, "joying in my own happy condition, and pitying this poor rich man that owned this and many other pleasant groves and meadows about me, I did thankfully remember that my Saviour said that the meek possess the earth. Anglers and meek, quiet-

spirited men are free from those high and restless thoughts which corrode the sweets of life, and they therefore enjoy what others possess and enjoy not." Is it not true that, in the best things, the whole is for each? The truest treasure is indivisible. What is it that Miss Ella Wheeler Wilcox sings in her poem, "All for Me"?

"The world grows green on a thousand hills—
By a thousand willows the bees are humming,
And a million birds by a million rills
Sing of the golden season coming.
But, gazing out on the sun-kissed lea,
And hearing a thrush and a bluebird singing,
I feel that the summer is all for me,
And all for me the joys it is bringing.

"All for me the bumble-bee
Drones his song in the perfect weather;
And, just on purpose to sing to me,
Thrush and bluebird come here together.
Just for me, in red and white,
Bloom and blossom the fields of clover;
And all for me and my delight
The wild wind follows and plays the lover."

Yes, all for me, all for me, *all for me!* That was what I caught myself saying to myself as I walked home from church in the sunshine of that spring Sunday morning. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ—all for me, *all for me!* And the love of God—all for me, *all for me!* And the communion of the Holy Ghost—all for me, *all*

for me; "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all." Yes, with us all—it was all for me, *all for me!*

III

This was good, but better was to come. For, just as I came in sight of the golden wattle beside my own gate, another thought arrested me. Looking at the Benediction once again, I saw that it is not so much the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost who are to be with me; but the *grace* of the Saviour and the *love* of the Father and the *communion* of the Holy Ghost. The service that I have just attended must leave its fragrance, that is to say, upon my own spirit. It is as though the preacher had said, "You have been rejoicing in the inexhaustible grace of Jesus: now be *yourself* gracious! You have been in the presence of God, and God is love: now be *yourself* tender-hearted and affectionate! You have enjoyed the radiant fellowship of the Holy Spirit: now be *yourself* companionable and inspiring!" I remember to have read of a Valley of Roses. It is so extensive, and the lovely odours hang so heavily about the beauteous vale, that the traveller who passes through it carries the perfume on his person for days afterwards, and people look knowingly at each other as he

enters the room. They know without being told that he has been in the Valley of Roses. As I projected my memory back to that tense closing moment of the service I had left, it seemed as though the Benediction was an exhortation. It called upon me to share with others the boon that had been mine, by carrying with me the fragrance in which I had been revelling. It seemed, as I contemplated my restless spirit and my dusty heart, a mere counsel of perfection; and yet, and yet—

> "A Persian fable says: One day
> A wanderer found a piece of clay
> So redolent of sweet perfume
> Its odour scented all the room.
> 'What art thou?' was the quick demand,
> 'Art thou some gem from Samarcand?
> Or spikenard rare in rich disguise?
> Or other costly merchandise?'
> 'Nay, I am but a piece of clay!'
> 'Then whence this wondrous sweetness, pray?'
> 'Friend, if the secret I disclose,
> I have been *dwelling with a rose!*'"

I fancy that is what the preacher meant. If, within the house of the Lord, I had been really enjoying the society of that holy Saviour who is Himself the fountain of all grace, surely I must thereafter be *myself* more gracious! If, during those hallowed moments, I had gazed upon the Love that will not let me go, surely I must there-

after be *myself* more loving! If, there in the sanctuary, I had revelled in the fellowship of the Comforter, surely there can be no soul beneath the stars to whom I can henceforth deny my own sympathy and friendship. Yes, that was what the preacher meant—"*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.*" And as I put my hand to the latch of my own gate, I involuntarily murmured "*Amen*" a second time.

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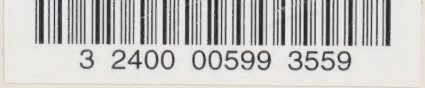
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